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the COMIC READER
Number 200
April 1982
ABRAMS '81

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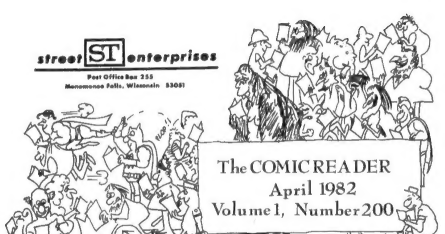

The COMIC READER
April 1982
Volume 1, Number 200

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COVER ARTIST: Paul Abrams

OUR COVER: For a special issue, we have this special illustration with 49 heros from Lou Mougin's "Back-Seat Heroes" series. Recognize everyone? We'll identify all of them next issue. All characters © their respective publishers.

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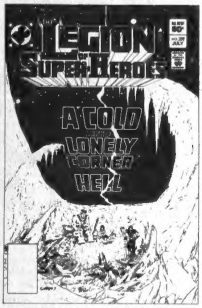
DC News

DC has made up its 1982 schedule and decided what's coming and what's going. Basically, what's going are the low-selling dollar comics WORLD'S FINEST and SUPERMAN FAMILY.

WORLD'S FINEST is dropping to 32 pages, retaining only the SUPERMAN AND BATMAN and GREEN ARROW strips as of #283, out in September. SUPERMAN FAMILY will end with #222, the September issue on sale in June. Thereafter, the SUPERGIRL and LOIS LANE strips will appear in a new title, THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERGIRL (which of course will begin with #1). LOIS LANE will be the back-up strip. #1 is out in November.

The remaining features from the magazines are headed in different directions. SHAZAM! will be appearing in at least two adventures in the new ADVENTURE COMICS DIGEST beginning with #491, the September issue. HAWKMAN will join the current alternating roster of ATOM, AIR WAVE and AQUAMAN in the back of ACTION COMICS. MR. AND MRS. SUPERMAN and JIMMY OLSEN will most likely end up as back-up strips in the SUPERMAN title.



The other cancellation is of UNKNOWN SOLDIER, which ends a string of 399 regularly-published issues with #268 (yet another title doomed before it could reach 400!). Taking its place as a war-oriented book will be BLACKHAWK, which has yet to be assigned to a writer, artist or editor officially. (If the pattern is followed, the book won't start with #251; the bet around here is that it'll be THE BLACKHAWKS #1.) If the previous plan is followed, it'll be set during World War II, possibly tying into ALL-STAR SQUADRON.

SOMEWHERE...
AN EXCELLENT JOURNEY, LORD BEDFORD, YOUR KNIGHTS DO YOU HONOR.
OH, NO, BARSKY WHITTERS, IT IS TO HONOR YOU!
WITHOUT YOUR AID, MY SUBJECTS AND I WOULD SURELY HAVE BEEN SLAUGHTERED
THINK NOTHING OF IT, LORD BEDFORD. IT WAS MY PLEASURE.
BESIDES, THE BUSINESS DEAL WE CONCLUDED WILL DO ME QUITE WELL.
THE PRIME LONDON ANAL ESRITE YOU SIGNED OVER TO ME SHOULD BE WORTH QUITE ALOT...
...IN SIX HUNDRED YEARS.--EH?
SIGH! IT FIGURES. ALWAYS INTERRUPTIONS.
RRING
RRING
IT APPEARS I MUST TAKE MY LEAVE.
THE LORD BE WITH YOU, MY GOOD FRIEND
MY PEOPLE WILL NOT FORGET YOUR SERVICE THIS DAY.

The other new titles have either been scheduled for the first time or retitled. DARK FORCE, already on its second title, has been again re-dubbed NIGHT FORCE. This is due to the possible conflicts of the previous name in licensing circles. AMETHYST, PRINCESS OF GEMWORLD, was scheduled to be previewed in WARLORD #60 and debut in June in its own book; that plan has been delayed for a while because of a related matter which we'll discuss in just a minute. PANDORA PANN is scheduled to preview in SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING #5 and debut in October.

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BLACKHAWK makes its first appearance that month, with the CAMELOT 3000 maxi-series set (tentatively) to appear in December.

Frank Miller is working on a special project for DC which will be his own creation. No other information is available at this point except that it will be a direct-sales only item and it is targeted to appear in April -- of 1983.

The related matter is the full-scale reassignment of books to new editors with the elevation of Dick Giordano to Managing Editor and the hiring of Marv Wolfman as Editor and Ernie Colon as Junior Editor. Dave Manak is devoting more of his time to Special Projects, so he's cutting his workload as well. This is the way the line-up shapes up:

ROSS ANDRU - Jonah Hex
KAREN BERGER - House of Mystery, Pandora Pann
MURRAY BOLTINOFF - G.I. Combat (the only remaining dollar book)
CARL GAFFORD - Adventure Comics Digest, The Best of DC
JOE KUBERT - Sgt. Rock
DAVE MANAK - Amethyst, Princess of Gemworld, Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew!
JULIUS SCHWARTZ - Action Comics, DC Comics Presents, The New Adventures of Superboy, The New Adventures of Supergirl, Superman
JULIUS SCHWARTZ AND NELSON BRIDWELL - Weird War Tales
LAURIE SUTTON - The Legion of Super-Heroes, Warlord, the World's

MEANWHILE...
WE CERTAINLY NEED OUR FRIEND DONOVAN, DON'T WE, MERLIN?
AS WELL AS HIS AWESOME LINK.
POOR VANREGA VAN NELSONS.
SHE'S ALREADY SCARRED SO VERY MUCH.
VAGGGHHHH
LET ME OUT!!
ILLEGITTT MEESE OUTTT! OHH MEEEERRREEE!
I--IT HURTS... HURTS SO MUCH... SO MUCH PAIN...
...SO MUCH BLOOD!!
C-CAN'T YOU HEAR THE SCREAMS? THE FIRE... STOP THE FIRE...IT...IT HURTS SO MUCH...
SOMEBODY, PLEASE... PLEASE COME... PLEASE STOP THE PAIN!..

Greatest Superheroes strip
LEN WEIN - All-Star Squadron, Batman, The Brave and the Bold, Camelot 3000, Detective Comics, The Fury of Firestorm, Justice League of America, The New Teen Titans, Saga of the Swamp Thing
MARV WOLFMAN (With ERNIE COLON) - Arak/Son of Thunder, The Flash, Green Lantern, The Night Force, Wonder Woman, World's Finest Comics
UNASSIGNED - Blackhawk

(You will note that Marv is editing NIGHT FORCE despite the fact that he is the writer; when we asked how come, we were told "Because.")

Because of Colon's new editorial position, AMETHYST has been delayed while Colon becomes acclimated to his duties (he is the artist on the book).

Besides Dick Giordano's long-portended promotion, others are moving up in the ranks. Paul Levitz, erstwhile TCR editor and holder of many positions at DC, has been made Vice President of Operations, putting him in the position of one of DC's key-decision makers in the business side of the company. His duties are in the area of licensing, marketing, subsidiary rights, legal affairs and administration. Congratulations, Paul!

With the new royalties plan, a Manager of Administration was needed, so Declan Mulcahy has been named to that newly-created job. He will also be involved in the processing and payment administration of the direct sales program. Mulcahy comes to the company after having worked for Consumers Directing Corporation and the Comptroller of the RCI Corporation.

And we have a new Promotion Manager for the direct-sales market and fan press: Michael Flynn. Aside from his prior position at a major advertising agency, Flynn is known best in fandom for his involvement in the LEGION OUT-POST fanzine.

Andy Helfer, who spent a short time in the press liason job as well as being an Assistant Editor and Editorial Assistant (whatever the difference is there), is now Special Projects Editor under Joe Orlando. He'll work on all non-comic book creative projects.

With Marvel having so much success with licensed properties dealing with dolls and other properties, DC has decided to get in on the act. This month's DC COMICS PRESENTS, in fact, presents the first one: Superman teams up with the Masters of the Universe, a new set of sword and sorcery characters which are being released by Mattel as toys this year. The Atari division of Warner Communications is teaming up with DC for three books based on games that they have the rights to: STAR RAIDERS, DEFENDER and BERZERK. These have yet to be scheduled.

Gil Kane is back at DC and doing a whole bunch of covers as well as some interior stories. WORLD'S FINEST #282 features his version of Captain Marvel and the Green Arrow. That same issue features a Hawkman story by Carmine Infantino and a Superman and Batman tale by Irv Novick.

The LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES ANNUAL #1 features the debut of a brand-new Legionnaire as well as virtually every member in a 41-page story. The villain is Computo, and there's a two-page cutaway of the Legion HQ.

The SUPERMAN ANNUAL #9 features a Marv Wolfman/Rich Buckler story featuring the Earth-One and Earth-Two Supermen.

BATMAN ANNUAL #8 features the return of Ra's Al Ghul in a story by Mike Barr and Trevor Von Eeden.

The SWAMP THING ANNUAL #1 is an adaptation of the film (which is out in March). The annual is due out in August.

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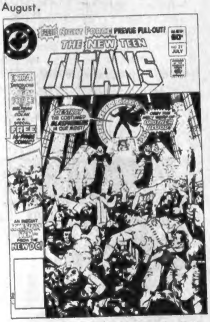

Rose and the Thorn return in THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #188 and 189 in a story by Robert Kanigher and Jim Aparo.

The SWAMP THING movie will coincide with three different contests. Two are being held in South Carolina where the movie was filmed; the third is sponsored by Embassy Pictures and DC Comics and will appear in DC's March and April issues. One of the prizes is a weekend trip to New York for the winner and his family to tour DC and meet the people behind SWAMP THING.

Lastly, we'd like to congratulate our cover artist, Paul Abrams for having some of his work slated for publication. WONDER WOMAN #290 features his pencils over Joe Staton's layouts on the HUNTRESS story; GREEN LANTERN #150 features some backgrounds he did in the second part of the book.

Marvel News

Well, two of the limited series have been put on the schedule. HERCULES #1 and WOLVERINE #1 will both be out in June dated September. HERCULES #1 is written, pencilled and inked by Bob Layton and it involves Hercules' exile in space by Zeus to make him learn humility. WOLVERINE #1 is by Chris Claremont, Frank Miller and Joe Rubinstein, and involves Wolverine in Japan where he finds his true love, but it messes up the rest of his life.

Marvel is publishing a comic or comic book insert entitled THE MARVEL GUIDE TO COLLECTING COMICS. It's written by Mark Burbey and designed by Walt Simonson, and is intended to introduce new readers to the often complicated world of collecting comics for fun (and, unfortunately, profit). If it's published as a book of its own, it'll appear only via the direct-sales route.

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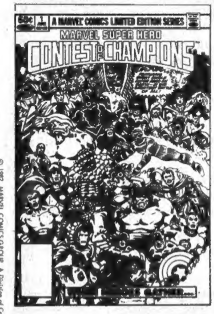
The delays of so many special projects of late has been a partial reason behind Marvel's promotion of former assistant editor Mark Gruenwald to full editor status. He's expected to fill in the slack and prevent similar delays from occuring in the future. His assistant will be Michael Carlin, who's done freelance work for CRAZY MAGAZINE.

Speaking of delayed special projects, the GIANT SILVER SURFER and DEATH OF CAPTAIN MARVEL comics have finally gone to the printer and should appear any day now. Both the ELRIC and DREADSTAR graphic novels are also finished and will go to the printer soon.

Over in the MARVEL SUPER

SPECIAL series, a number of things have been finalized. David Kraft and Marie Severin are doing the adaptation of DARK CRYSTAL, set to appear around July 30th. The BLADE-RUNNER adaptation features a Jim Steranko cover painting. The ANNIE adaptation will be done by Tom DeFalco and Winslow Mortimer. And Marvel is considering adapting Frank Herbert's novel DUNE, even though the movie is only still in the works.

The POPE JOHN comic book will be written by Steven Grant and drawn by John Tartaglione.



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The G.I. JOE commercial shall began airing on national TV on March 29th and it will run for eight weeks. The commercial will plug only the comic book (though no specific issue) and was done by Marvel Productions. Hopes are running high at Marvel that the commercial will bring big sales and the possibility exists that future commercials for the regular line of Marvel comics (featuring four titles in one commercial, i.e. SPIDER-MAN, FANTASTIC FOUR, THOR and DAREDEVIL) might be tried if the G.I. JOE one brings customers in in large enough numbers.

Speaking of Marvel Productions, they've been given the go-ahead to do thirteen episodes of an INCREDIBLE HULK cartoon series by NBC.

Jim Starlin has done two new covers for IRON MAN and is working on a MARVEL FANFARE two-parter featuring the Thing, the Hulk and Dr. Strange.

John Buscema is returning to the color CONAN book and will be the regular penciller and inker.

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David Michelinie will script both the ANT-MAN and WONDER MAN limited series books.

The plots and creative teams on most of this year's annuals have been announced. They include:

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL - The new Captain Marvel, a black woman with electromagnetic powers, makes her debut in a story written by Roger Stern, layed out by John Romita and finished by John Romita, Jr.

CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL - J.M. DeMatteis will script a story which will feature all four people who have worn the Captain America costume. Mister Buda, villain of the CAPTAIN AMERICA TREASURY, makes his return.

THOR ANNUAL - There'll be a funeral for a god, the secret pact of the Death-Gods (Hela, Pluto, Mephista, et al.) and an all-new omnipotent supermenace. Bob Hall does the art.

MARVEL TEAM-UP ANNUAL - Mark Gruenwald will both write and pencil an issue featuring Spider-Man,

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the Thing, Quasar, Dr. Strange, and Scarlet Witch at Project Pegasus.

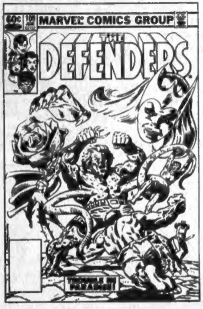
THE AVENGERS ANNUAL - The Avengers battle the Defenders. J.M. De Matteis scripts.

MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE ANNUAL - Tom DeFalco and Ron Wilson will present the Heavyweight Championship Bout of the Universe, featuring nine super-hero contenders who battle the omnipotent Champion.

IRON MAN ANNUAL - Black Panther guest-stars with Killmonger from JUNGLE ACTION as the villain. Ralph Macchio and Jerry Bingham are the creative team.

Gary Hallgren is the new regular penciller of TEEN-HULK in CRAZY.

Stained Glass Scarlet returns in MOON KNIGHT #23.



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X-MEN #161 features a flashback to the childhood of Professor X in which a very different Magneto teams up with him to battle Baron Strucker.

Marvel's licensing division, which is becoming a vast source of income for the company, has signed two clients to their service. Hasbro has assigned the merchandising rights to their G.I. JOE characters to Marvel for everything excluding action figures and dolls. And Archie Comics has named their fellow publishing house as the licensor of all non-domestic publishing and toy manufacturing rights. This designation does NOT mean that Marvel will be publishing ARCHIE comic books.

Carol Kalish, formerly with New Media/Injax as an editor and publisher, has joined Marvel's staff as Assistant Direct Sales Manager to Mike Friedrich.

The Black Bolt and the Angel appear in DAZZLER #19.

Frank Miller revives Stilt-Man for DAREDEVIL #186 and returns his costume to him.

MARVEL PAPERBACK #9 will feature the BLADE RUNNER adaptation. #10 is an AVENGERS collection featuring reprints of the Vision's origin from #57 and 58 and the intro of the Valkyrie from #83.

Whitman Coming Comics

THE ALIENS No. 2, May. Reprints by Russ Manning from MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER starring Captain Johner. [4/2]

BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY No. 16, May. A new story. [4/2]

GRIMM'S GHOST STORIES No. 59, May. 2/3 new stories. [4/2]

THE OCCULT FILES OF DOCTOR SPEKTOR No. 25, May. Reprints by Don Glut and Jesse Santos begin. [4/2]

SPACE FAMILY ROBINSON LOST IN SPACE No. 59, May. Reprints by Gaylord DuBois and Dan Spiegle. [4/2]

THE TWILIGHT ZONE No. 92, May. All reprint material. [4/2]

BROTHERS OF THE SPEAR No. 18, May. Reprints from either past issues of this title by Jesse Santos, or from TARZAN by Russ Manning. [4/9]

GRIMM'S GHOST STORIES No. 60, June. 2/3 reprint stories. [4/9]

THE JUNGLE TWINS No. 18, May. A reprint by Paul Norris. [4/9]

SHADOW PLAY No. 1, June. All-new material originally intended for RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT and BORIS KARLOFF TALES OF MYSTERY. [4/9]

SHROUD OF MYSTERY No. 1, June. Again, all-new material originally meant for the abovementioned titles. [4/9]

TRAGG AND THE SKY GODS No. 9, May. A reprint from the original series by Don Glut and Jesse Santos, plus a new seven pager. [4/9]

BEEP BEEP THE ROAD RUNNER No. 102, May. 2/3 reprints. [4/23]

DAFFY DUCK No. 142, May. 2/3 reprint material. [4/23]

LOONEY TUNES No. 44, May. 2/3 new material. [4/23]

POPEYE THE SAILOR No. 168, May. All reprints by Bud Sagendorf. [4/23]

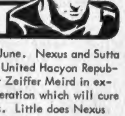
PORKY PIG No. 106, May. 2/3 new stories. [4/23]

TOM AND JERRY No. 342, May. All reprints, probably by Harvey Eisenberg, Phil DeLara and Vive Risto. [4/23]

TWEETY AND SYLVESTER No. 117, May. 2/3 new material. [4/23]

WOODY WOODPECKER No. 198, May. 2/3 new material. [4/23]

YOSEMITE SAM No. 79, May. All reprints. [4/23]



NEXUS No. 2, June. Nexus and Sutta LeBerq enter the United Hacyon Republics to kill tyrant Zeiffer Meird in exchange for an operation which will cure him of his dreams. Little does Nexus know that Sutta's henchmen are preparing to make off with his Fusion Plasma Generator... Mike Baron and Steve Rude did the story; Paul Gulacy did the cover. [March]

NEXUS #3 will feature what they call the first Flexi-Comic, a flexible vinyl record bound into each issue. It will feature a stereo soundtrack featuring special effects, original background music, spoken dialogue and narration. The format of the magazine itself will be unchanged, and the price will be $2.95.

Eclipse Enterprises will be publishing three tie-in projects with Swampfilms' SWAMP THING film based on the DC character. THE MAKING OF THE SWAMP THING MOVIE MAGAZINE is being edited by Dean Mullaney and written by Alan Asherman; it contains photos, interviews and a frame-by-frame sequence detailing the "burn scene" from the film. Paul Gulacy will do the SWAMP THING movie art portfolio, featuring four full-color plates. And a trade paperback of Wes Craven's screenplay is the third tie-in.

ECLIPSE's DESTROYER DUCK benefit issue has had "exceptional sales," and so will go to a four-part mini-series beginning this fall. In the standard 32-page comics format in four-color for $1.00, the adless comics will be by Steve Gerber, Jack Kirby and Alfredo Alcala. Each issue will be a separate story.

The SABRE album will be split into

a series of six new four-color 32 page $1.00 comics published on a bi-monthly basis beginning in April. Paul Gulacy did new covers for the series which was written by Don McGregor.

Eclipse's third four-color comic book series will be SCORPIO ROSE, premiering in June. Steve Englehart and Marshall Rogers have reworked what was originally a MADAME XANADU story into the adventures of a tarot-reading astrologer/sorceress encountering supernatural in Paris. The back-up strip will be DR. ORIENT, a series based on a paperback hero done by its creator, Frank Lauria with Steve Leialoha. Dr. Orient is a psychic investigator. The comic will appear bi-monthly.

ECLIPSE No. 6, July. MS. TREE is the lead feature with the concluding chapter of "I, For an Eye" by Max Allan Collins and Terry Beatty. Other features: COYOTE by Steve Englehart and Marshall Rogers (part five); chapter five of "Dope" by Trina Robbins; "Luke the Drifter" by Lenny Kaye and Paul Gulacy; "Alice Quinn" by Harvey Pekar and Sue Cavey; "A Li'l Monster Making a Phone Call" by Larry Rippee; and more by Don McGregor, Tom Sutton and Rick Geary. Paul Gulacy did the cover, which features Ms. Tree. [4/7]

SABRE No. 1, July. The SABRE saga is being reprinted in four-color in a regular comic format for $1.00. The first of six issues introduces Sabre and his love interest Melissa Siren in the year 2018 after a nuclear holocaust as they battle the tyrannical Overseer. Don McGregor and Paul Gulacy did the stories and the original cover is a bonus centerspread. Gulacy did a new front cover. [April]

CHRONICLES No. 4, July. This issue feature's Fantaco's 48 page, $1.50 coverage of THE AVENGERS, a la their previous issues featuring the X-Men, Fantastic Four, and Daredevil. [4/15]

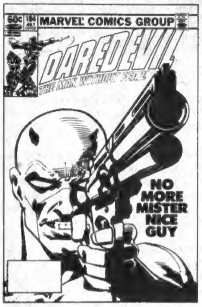
WaRP Graphics have announced the intended publication of YEARNINGS, THE ELFQUEST COMPANION for early summer of '82. Fiction, articles, art, cartoons, songs, etc. will be featured in a 100-page issue, featuring art by Wendy Pini, and editing by Richard Pini and Jane Fancher. The price will be $3.95 from WaRP (2 Reno Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603) or from direct sales outlets.

The 1981 Phantasy Press Comic Art Awards (dubbed the Woody Awards in honor of Wally Wood) have been announced by Bob Conway. Frank Miller, Klaus Janson and DAREDEVIL walked off with best artist, writer, inker, and comic book awards, as did the story "Elektra."

Best New Comic Book Award went to CHARLTON BULLSEYE, Best Comic Magazine to EPIC ILLUSTRATED, Best cover to STAR WARS #43 by Al Williamson; Best Alternative Comic to ELFQUEST; and Wally Wood was named to the Hall of Fame.

Marvel Coming C

DAREDEVIL No. 184, July. "Again, the Punisher" is by Frank Miller and Klaus Janson. The Angel Dust story concludes. Miller and Janson did the cover. [3/23]



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DAZZLER No. 17, July. "Angel and the Octopus" is by Danny Fingeroth, Frank Springer and Vince Colletta. Warren Worthington likes the Dazzler, but she's too busy with Doc Ock to notice. Springer and Colletta did the cover. [3/23]

DENNIS THE MENACE No. 9, July. Fred Toole and the Ketcham Studio. [3/23]

*KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE No. 16, July. "It Creeps" is by Bruce Jones, Ron Frenz and Armando Gil. As a change of pace, a monster story. Also, a new Zabu tale by Chuck Jones and Val Mayerick. Brent Anderson did the cover. [3/23]

KING CONAN No. 11, July. "The Haunter of the Cenotaph" is by Doug Moench, Alan Kupperberg, Steve Mitchell, Ricardo Villamonte and Mel Candido. Conan must prevent a takeover by a group in collaboration with the legendary Death-Shaper. The cover is by Bill Sienkiewicz. [3/23]

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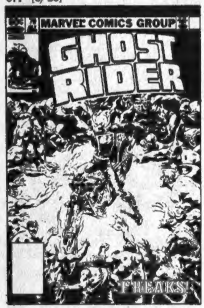
MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE No. 89, July. "The Last Word" is by David Kraft, Alan Kupperberg and Chic Stone. The Thing and the Human Torch team up. Kupperberg and Rich Magyar did the cover. [3/23]

TEAM AMERICA No. 2, July. "Dark Machine" is by Bill Mantlo, Luke McDonnell and Vince Colletta. A death race through the Rockies, plus the debut of new members Cowboy and Wrench. Mike Vosburg and Colletta did the cover. [3/23]



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THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 230, July. "To Fight the Unbeatable Foe" is by Roger Stern, John Romita Jr. and Jim Mooney. The wrap-up of the battle with Juggernaut. Al Milgrom did the cover. [3/30]

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CAPTAIN AMERICA No. 271, July. "The Mystery of Mr. X" is by David Kraft, Alan Kupperberg and John Beatty, plus others. A mystery to us, as well. Kupperberg and Beatty did the cover. [3/30]

CRAZY MAGAZINE No. 87, June. "Night Tables of the Stars" by Dave Morris; "The Origin of Obnoxio" by John Lakey; spoofs of "Ragtime" by Paul Kupperberg and Bob Camp, and "The Jeffersons" by Murad Gumen and Kent Gamble. Bob Larkin did the cover. [3/30]

GHOST RIDER No. 70, July. "Freaks" is by Roger Stern, Bob Budiansky and Dave Simons. GR battles a band of freaks. Budiansky and Simons did the cover. [3/30]

G.I. JOE No. 2, July. "Panic at the North Pole" is by Larry Hama, Don Perlin and Jack Abel. The G.I. Joe group battle a Russian team of similar construction, as well as Cobra. Perlin did the cover. [3/30]

*MICRONAUTS No. 43, July. "Home Again, Home Again, Jiggety Jig" is by Bill Mantlo, Gil Kane and Danny Bulanadi. Half of the team battles the Force Commander, the other half Computrex and Professor Prometheus. Kane did the cover. [3/30]

*MOON KNIGHT No. 21, July. "Master of Night Earth" is by Doug Moench, Vicente Alcazar, John Tartaglione and Bob Camp. In Haiti: zuvembies, Brother Voodoo and terrorists. Bill Sienkiewicz did the cover. [3/30]

THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN No. 77, June. "Cave Dwellers" is by Michael Fleisher, John Buscema and Ernie Chan. Joe Jusko did the cover. [3/30]

THOR No. 321, July. "Magick's Menace" is by Doug Moench, Alan Kupperberg and Chic Stone. Blake's Menagerie terrorize Earth while Thor battles Loki in Asgard. Kupperberg and Brett Breeding did the cover. [3/30]

THE AVENGERS No. 221, July. "The Avengers Want You" is by Jim Shooter, Bob Hall and Brett Breeding. Two new Avengers join up, and the new Femizons are created: the Wasp, Invisible Girl, Black Widow, She-

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Hulk, Dazzler and Spider-Woman. Ed Hannigan and Joe Rubinstein did the cover. [4/6]

CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 136, July. "Forest of the Night" is by Bruce Jones, John Buscema and Danny Bulanadi. To save a child, Conan battles a sea monster. Buscema did the cover. [4/6]

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THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 273, July. "Once a Hulk, Always a Hulk" is by Bill Mantlo and Sal Buscema. The Hulk has Banner's brain, and tries to save Canada from the Insectoids. Al Milgrom and Joe Sinnott did the cover. [4/6]

*MARVEL FANFARE No. 3, July. "Lost Souls" is by Chris Claremont, Dave Cockrum and Bob McLeod. Another chapter featuring the X-Men and Ka-Zar. The back-up is "Swashbucklers" by Charles Boismer, Trevor Von Eeden and Joe Rubinstein. Cockrum and McLeod did the front cover. [4/6]

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MARVEL SUPER-HEROES CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS No. 2, July. Part two of the story is by Bill Mantlo, John Romita Jr. and Pablo Marcos. The Grandmaster makes everybody battle everyone else, with these heroes spotlighted: Daredevil, Iron Fist, Invisible Girl, Sunfire, Darkstar, She-Hulk, Iron Man, the Arabian Knight, Captain Britain, and the new Talisman. Romita Jr. and Bob Layton did the cover. [4/6]

MARVEL TALES STARRING SPIDER-MAN No. 141, July. "Nothing Can Stop...the Sandman" is by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, and was originally presented in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #4. Ditko did the cover. [4/6]

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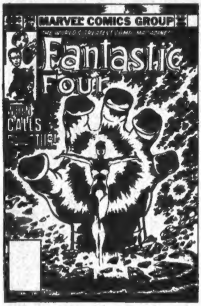
POWER MAN AND IRON FIST No. 83, July. "War Without End" is by Mary Jo Duffy, Denys Cowan and Carl Potts. Dr. Noah Burstein returns to see how his creation (Power Man) turned out, and the secret of Warhawk is revealed. Cowan and Klaus Janson did the cover. [4/6]

ROM No. 32, July. "Mutant, Mutant, Über Alles" is by Bill Mantlo, Sal Buscema and Joe Sinnott. Hybrid is going to destroy Earth unless Rom teams up with Destiny, Mystique and Rogue to battle him. Al Milgrom and Sinnott did the cover. [4/6]

THE UNCANNY X-MEN No. 159, July. "Nightscreams" is by Chris Claremont, Bill Sienkiewicz and Bob Wiacek. The X-Men meet Count Dracula. Sienkiewicz did the cover. [4/6]



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THE DEFENDERS No. 109, July. "Vengeance Cries the Valkyrie" is by J. Marc DeMatteis, Mark Gruenwald, Dan Perlin and Joe Sinnott. Val's back in her own body and confronts the Enchantress; Spider-Man and the other Defenders battle Harpies; and Dr. Strange searches for Daimon Hellstrom, Hulk and Sub-Mariner. Al Milgrom did the cover. [4/13]

EPIC ILLUSTRATED No. 12, June. In this issue: Marada the She-Wolf by Chris Claremont and John Bolton; Weirdworld Part III by Doug Moench, John Buscema and Marie Severin; Abraxas and the Earthman Part III by Rick Veitch; "Cabin Feber" by Ralph Reese; and a Basil Wolverton SPACE-HAWK story (from Novelty Press), slightly edited and recolored by Veitch, as well as an article by Ron Goulart, "The World According to Wolverton." Frank Brunner did the cover. [4/13]

FANTASTIC FOUR No. 244, July. "Beginnings and Endings" is by John Byrne. Galactus's decision, Frankie Raye's final fate, and Franklin Richard's powers. Plus--Doctor Doom. Byrne and Terry Austin did the cover. [4/13]

IRON MAN No. 160, July. "Zoo Story" is by Denny O'Neil, Steve Ditko and Dan Green. Iron Man battles the Serpent Squad. Jim Starlin did the cover. [4/13]

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MARVEL TEAM-UP No. 119, July. "Time Runs Like a Freight Train" is by J. Marc De Matteis, Kerry Gammill and Mike Esposito. Spider-Man and the Gargoyle in a tale of "life, death, hope, despair and old age." Gammill and Joe Rubinstein did the cover. [4/13]

MASTER OF KUNG FU No. 114, July. "Fantasy of the Autumn Moon" is by Doug Moench and Gene Day. Shang-Chi tries to stop a Si-Fan assassin who's stalked his victim over forty years' time. Based on an authentic Chinese legend. Day did the cover. [4/13]

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PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN No. 68, July. "Hell Hath No Fury Like a Robot's Scorn" is by Bill Mantlo, Luke McDonnell and Jim Mooney. From out of the past--the Robot-Master. Ed Hannigan and Al Milgrom did the cover. [4/13]

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STAR WARS No. 61, July. "Screams in the Void" is by David Michelinie, Walt Simonson and Tom Palmer. An attack on the armada gives Luke a chance to learn about the Force. Simonson did the cover. [4/13]

Archie Coming Comics

ARCHIE'S DOUBLE DIGEST QUARTERLY MAGAZINE No. 2, May. [2/23]

ARCHIE'S GIRLS, BETTY AND VERONICA No. 317, May. [2/23]

ARCHIE'S PALS 'N' GALS No. 158, May. [2/23]

LAUGH No. 372, May. [2/23]

ARCHIE No. 316, May. [3/2]

ARCHIE'S JOKEBOOK No. 285, May. [3/2]

LAUGH COMICS DIGEST MAGAZINE No. 40, May. [3/2]

ARCHIE...ARCHIE ANDREWS WHERE ARE YOU DIGEST MAGAZINE No. 22, May. [3/9]

BETTY AND ME No. 128, May. [3/9]

LIFE WITH ARCHIE No. 231, May. [3/9]

ARCHIE'S TV LAUGH-OUT No. 85, May. [3/16]

JUGHEAD WITH ARCHIE COMICS DIGEST MAGAZINE No. 50, May. [3/16]

SABRINA, THE TEEN-AGE WITCH No. 73, May. [3/16]

ARCHIE'S GIRLS, BETTY AND VERONICA No. 318, June. Dan DeCarlo did the cover. [3/23]

PEP No. 384, June. Stan Goldberg did the cover. [3/23]

ARCHIE No. 317, June. Dan DeCarlo did the cover. [3/30]

ARCHIE COMICS DIGEST MAGAZINE No. 54, June. Dan DeCarlo did the cover. [3/30]

ARCHIE GIANT SERIES MAGAZINE No. 518, June. This issue features a BETTY AND VERONICA SPECTACULAR. Dan DeCarlo did the cover. [3/30]

MAD HOUSE COMICS No. 128, June. Stan Goldberg did the cover. [3/30]

ARCHIE AT RIVERDALE HIGH No. 86, June. Stan Goldberg did the cover. [4/6]

JUGHEAD No. 323, June. Stan Goldberg did the cover. [4/6]

JUGHEAD JONES COMICS DIGEST MAGAZINE No. 21, June. Dan DeCarlo did the cover. [4/6]

LITTLE ARCHIE No. 176, June. Dexter Taylor did the cover. [4/6]

ARCHIE AND ME No. 134, June. Stan Goldberg did the cover. [4/13]

EVERYTHING'S ARCHIE No. 101, June. Stan Goldberg did the cover. [4/13]

JOKEBOOK ANNUAL DIGEST MAGAZINE No. 10, June. [4/13]

DC Coming Comics

ARAK/SON OF THUNDER No. 11, July. "Gods After Twilight" is by Roy Thomas, Ernie Colon and Alfredo Alcala. Arak must not only battle a centaur, but also a satyr and Harpies, just to make things interesting. Then, the Viking Prince appears in "Frozen Hell For a Viking" by Robert Kanigher and Jan Duursema. Jon faces Krugg the Red. Colon did the cover. [4/8]

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THE BEST OF DC No. 26, July. The theme of the issue is stars from THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD, and reprints are "You Can't Hide From a Deadman"

(Batman and Deadman, from BRAVE & BOLD #86) by Bob Haney and Neal Adams; "Three Arrows Against Doom" (Robin Hood, B&B #9) by Russ Heath; "Menace of the Mirage People" (Suicide Squad, B&B #38) by Ross Andru and Mike Esposito; "Threat of the Ice King" (Viking Prince, B&B #18) by Joe Kubert; "The Sword in the Lake" (the Silent Knight, B&B #21) by Irv Novick; and "Secret Beneath the Earth" (Cave Carson, B&B #31) by France Herron and Bruno Premiani. Jim Aparo did the cover. [4/8]

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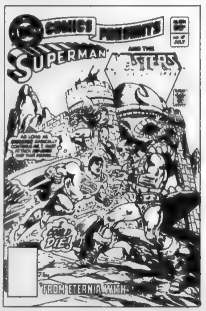
DC COMICS PRESENTS No. 47, July. "From Eternia...With Death" is by Paul Kupperberg, Curt Swan and Mike DeCarlo. Superman teams up with -- the Masters of the Universe. Who? Well, Mattel has this new set of dolls with that name, and if it works for Marvel, it just may work for DC, and this sword and sorcery group. The backup is the long-promised "Whatever Happened to Sandy?" by Mike W. Barr, Jose Delbo and John Calnan. Rass Andru and Frank Giacoia did the cover. [4/8]

DC SPECIAL BLUE-RIBBON DIGEST No. 23, July. Green Arrow's the star



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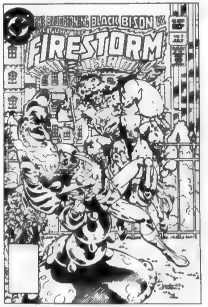
of this issue, and the stories are: "The Unmasked Archers" (WORLD'S FINEST #98) by Jack Kirby; "The Case of the Camouflage King" (WF #102) by Lee Elias; "The Amazing Miss Arrowette" (WF #113) by Elias; "Green Arrows of the World" (ADVENTURE COMICS #250) by Kirby; "Mystery of the Giant Arrows" (AC #252) by Kirby; "Prisoners of Dimension Zero" (AC #253) by Kirby; "The Senator's Been Shot" (BRAVE & BOLD #85) by Bob Haney and Neal Adams; "Origin of the Green Arrow" (DC SUPER-STARS #17) by Denny O'Neil and Mike Grell; "What Can One Man Do? (GREEN LANTERN #87) by Elliot Maggin, Neal Adams and Dick Giordano; and "The Plot to Kill Black Canary" (ACTION COMICS #428) by Maggin and Giordano. There's a seven page framing device as well, done by Mike Barr and Dan Spiegle. Jim Aparo did the cover. [4/8]



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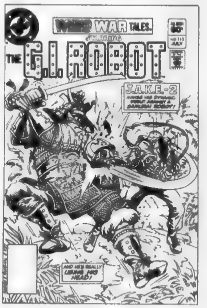
THE FURY OF FIRESTORM No. 2, July. "Rage" is by Gerry Conway, Pat Broderick and Rodin Rodriguez. While the senator's daughter is in deadly jeopardy, Firestorm is attacked by the Black Bison. Broderick and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/8]

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 203, July. "Luck of the Draw" is by Gerry Conway, Don Heck and Romeo Tanghal. The new Royal Flush Gang continues their nefarious plot, and another villain enters the picture. George Perez and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/8]



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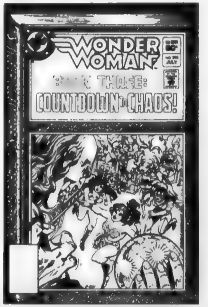
WEIRD WAR TALES No. 113, July. "The Robot and the Samurai" is by Robert Kanigher and Fred Carrillo. The G.I. Robot, J.A.K.E.-2 battles a Samurai robot. Other stories are "Those Who Ignore the Past" by Martin Pasko, Mike Silverstri and Larry Mahlstedt and "The Wal-War Incident" by Robin Snyder, Paris Cullin and Adrian Gonzales. Ross Andru and Romeo Tanghal did the cover. [4/8]

WONDER WOMAN No. 293, July. "Countdown to Chaos" or "When Tip the Scales is by Paul Levitz, Roy Thomas, Gene Colan and Frank McLaughlin. The superheroine-battle with the Fourth



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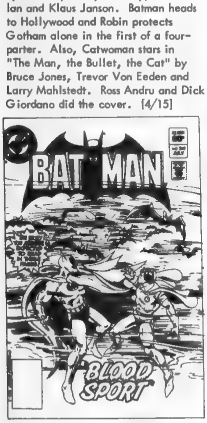
Horseman and the Adjudicator comes to a climax with guest appearances by Wonder Girl, Starfire and Raven. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/8]

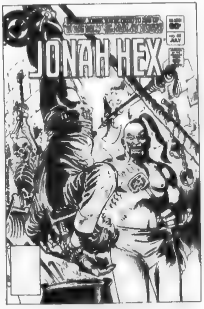
BATMAN No. 349, July. "Blood Sport" is by Gerry Conway, Gene Colan and Klaus Janson. Batman heads to Hollywood and Robin protects Gotham alone in the first of a four-parter. Also, Catwoman stars in "The Man, the Bullet, the Car" by Bruce Jones, Trevor Von Eeden and Larry Mahlstedt. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/15]



THE FLASH No. 311, July. "Captives of the Boom Boomerang" is by Cary Bates, Carmine Infantino and Dennis Jensen. Captain Boomerang sets the Flash spinning into the past. Then, Dr. Fate appears in "Rogue Gods" by Martin Pasko, Steve Gerber, Keith Giffen and Larry Mahlstedt. [4/15]

G.I. COMBAT No. 243, July. The Haunted Tank stories are "The Young

Wolves" by Robert Kanigher and Sam Glanzman and "Wednesday Soldier" by Kanigher and Dick Ayers and Glanzman. Also: Super Spy in "The Steel Eye" by Kanigher and E.R. Cruz; the Unknown War tale is "A Test of Loyalty" by Paul S. Newman and Nestor Redondo; the Behind the Battle Lines story is "Hitler's Human Weapon" by George Kashdan and Vic Catan; and "All About Tanks" is by Glanzman. Joe Kubert did the cover. [4/15]



JONAH HEX No. 62, July. "In the Belly of the Malay Tiger" is by Michael Fleisher, Dick Ayers and Tony DeZuniga. Jonah faces some Oriental perfidy. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/15]

THE NEW TEEN TITANS No. 21, July. "Beware the Wrath of Brother Blood" is by Marv Wolfman, George Perez and Romeo Tanghal. Out to avenge the death of a friend, the Titans meet up with Brother Blood. Plus, a 16-page preview tale of the Night Force by Marv Wolfman, Gene Colan and Bob Smith. The Night Force is a group which battles the dark occult and supernatural. Perez did the cover. [4/15]

SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING No. 3, July. "A Town Has Turned to Blood" is by Marty Pasko and Tom Yeates. Swamp Thing comes across a town plagued by vampirism. Then, the Phantom Stranger appears in "The Beauty of the Beast" by Mike Barr and Dan Spiegle. Yeates did the cover. [4/15]

SUPERMAN No. 373, July. "Lana Lang's Farewell to Earth" is by Cary Bates, Curt Swan and Dave Hunt. Lana is trapped in a force which will take her from Earth. Vartox returns. Also, Clark Kent in "An Eye (And Ear) On the World" by Bob Rozakis and John Calnan. Rich Buckler and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/15]

THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD No. 188, July. "A Grave as Wide as the World" is by Robert Kanigher and Jim Aparo. Batman and Rose and the Thorn star in the first half of a two-parter. Also, Nemesis is featured in "Gladiator's Gauntlet" by Cary Burkett and Dan Spiegle. Jim Aparo did the cover. [4/22]

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GREEN LANTERN No. 154, July. "Rotten to the Corps" is by Mike Barr, Joe Staton and Mike DeCarlo. Hal Jordan battles an evil version of himself. The Tale of the GL Corps is "A Matter of Snow" by Paul Kupperberg, Paris Cullin and Rodin Rodriguez Gil Kane did the cover. [4/22]

HOUSE OF MYSTERY No. 306, July. "A Rip in Time" is by Bruce Jones and Tom Sutton and is the I, Vampire story. Other stories are: "Royal Blood" by Carter Scholz, Curry and Tony DeZuniga; and "A Rift in the Veil" by Joey Cavalieri and Ernie Patricio. A filler is "I, Baby Vampire" by Steven DeStefano. Joe Kubert did the cover. [4/22]

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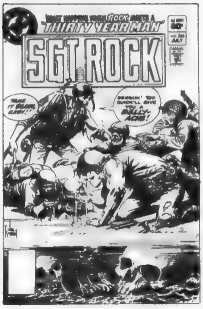

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THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES No. 289, July. "A Cold and Lonely Corner of Hell" is by Paul Levitz, Keith Giffen and Bruce Patterson. Romance blooms when the Legionnaires are stranded on an asteroid. Also: "Once Upon an Insanity" by Paul Levitz, Carmine Infantino and Larry Mahstadt. Brainiac 5 visits Matter-Eater Lad -- in an asylum. Giffen did the cover. [4/22]

SGT. ROCK No. 366, July. "The 30 Year Man" is by Robert Kanigher and Frank Redondo. Backups included are: "Old Faithful" by Tom Mandrake; "Destruction From Below"; "Dragon Smoke" by Kim DeMulder; and a Battle Album, Top Secret" by Bill Kelley and Ron Randall. Joe Kubert did the cover. [4/22]

THE SUPERMAN FAMILY No. 220, July. Supergirl leads off with "The Brooklyn Bridge is Falling Down" by Paul Kupperberg, Win Mortimer and Vince Colletta. The Mr. and Mrs. Superman story is "Where Off Earth Are You?" by Nelson Bridwell, Kurt Schaffenberger and Dan Adkins; Lois Lane stars in "Deadmen Do Tell Tales" by Tamsyn O'Flynn, Bob Oksner and Vince Colletta; and Jimmy Olsen is featured in "Old Friends...New Betrayals" by Paul Kupperberg, Jose Delbo and Joe Giella. Rich Buckler and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/22]

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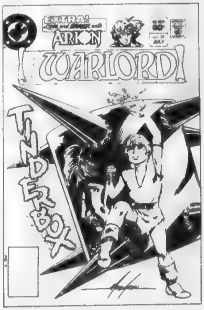
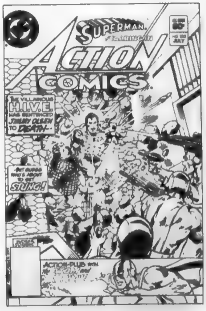


WARLORD No. 59, July. "Tinderbox" is by Mike Grell (story and pencils) and Mike DeCarlo. With Travis the man in the iron mask, an imposter has taken his place at his wife's side. Also: Arion appears in "Of Lovers and Demons and Sorcerous Things" by Paul Kupperberg and Jan Duursema. Grell did the cover. [4/22]

ACTION COMICS No. 533, July. "Trackdown" is by Marv Wolfman, Curt Swan and Frank Chiaramonte. Both Jimmy and Lois are threatened by H.I.V.E. The back-up is Ground Zero ...Where?" by Bob Rozakis, Alex



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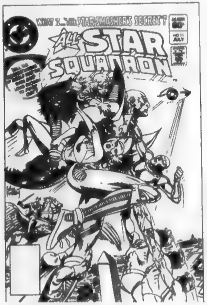
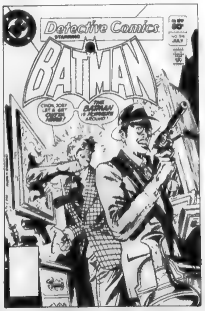
Saviuk and Frank Chiaramonte, featuring the Atom and Air Wave. Rich Buckler and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/29]

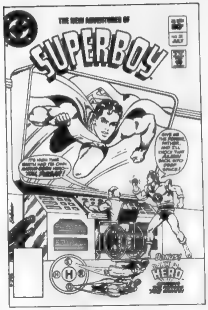
ALL-STAR SQUADRON No.11, July. "Star-Smasher's Secret" is by Roy Thomas, Adrian Gonzales and Jerry Ordway. The alien who has proclaimed that Earth shall live in peace by his decree is behind the disappearance of leading scientists in part two of a three-parter. Joe Kubert did the cover. [4/29]



CAPTAIN CARROT AND HIS AMAZING ZOO CREW! No. 5, July. "Secret of Easter Bunny Island" is by Roy Thomas, Scott Shaw, Chad Grothkopf and Bob Smith. Oklahoma Bones, explorer/archaeologist, joins the cast, as does villainous Dr. Hoot. Shaw and Grothkopf did the cover. [4/29]

DETECTIVE COMICS No. 516, July. "Final Exams" is by Gerry Conway, Paul Kupperberg, Don Newton and Frank Chiaramonte. Continued from



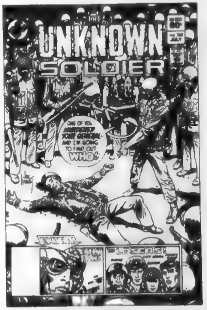


BATMAN #349; Batman's in Hollwood. Batgirl stars in the back-up, "Sleep While the Serpent Smiles" by Cary Burkett, Jose Delbo and Joe Giella. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [4/29]

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY No. 31, July. "The Main Event: Smallville, U.S.A." is by Dan Mishkin, Gary Cohn, Kurt Schaffenberger and Dave Hunt. A champion is created for Earth (called Pulsar) to protect it from an alien -- Superboy. Dial "H" For Hero is represented by "Thievery By Whitefire" by Nelson Bridwell, Bob Rozakis, Howard Bender and Dan Adkins. Schaffenberger did the cover. [4/29]

TALES OF THE NEW TEEN TITANS No. 2, July. "Raven" is by Marv Wolfman, George Perez and Romeo Tanghal. Raven's origin is revealed in her first solo outing. Perez did the cover. [4/29]

UNKNOWN SOLDIER No. 265, July. "Saint in a Tin Pot" is by Bob Haney, Dick Ayers and Gerry Talaoc. A tough general is murdered in Africa, and Unk investigates. Plus, the Losers star in "Young Losers, Young Lions" by Robert Kanigher, Dick Ayers and George Evans. (Despite what our cover repro says, there's no ENEMY ACE story in the issue.) Joe Kubert did the cover. [4/29]



WORLD'S FINEST COMICS No. 281, July. The Superman and Batman story is "War in the Streets" by Cary Burkett, Irv Novick and Frank Chiaramonte. An Army of Crime is out to conquer the world. Captain Marvel stars in "The One-Worn Monster Society" by Nelson Bridwell, Don Newton and John Calnan. Hawkman stars in "Out Into Space in Ships" by Bob Rozakis, Alex Saviuk and Rodin Rodriguez. And Green Arrow appears in "The Forgotten People" by Joey Cavalieri, Trevor Von Eeden and Rodrigues. Gil Kane did the cover. [4/29]

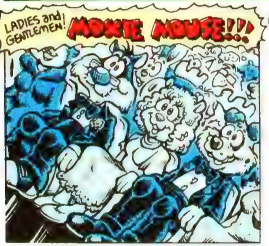
I BET YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SATURDAY, NOV. 7TH, DIDN'T YOU? NOT SO?!! IT'S THE MORNING OF TUESDAY, NOV. 3RD AND THAT WORRIED-LOOKING FIGURE ATOP THE FIRST NATIONAL TOWER IS
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
EPISODE #10: ©1981 Dan Reed
THE CITY PRECINCT HEADQUARTERS ARE ABOUT TO OPEN... AND DESPITE MY BEST EFFORTS, INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE VOTERS ARE GOING TO WRITE-IN CAPTAIN KENTUCKY FOR MAYOR! AND IF ALL THE OPINION POLLS ARE ACCURATE, I'LL PROBABLY WIN THE ELECTION!
I'D BETTER CHECK AND TAKE MY OWN POLL... AN EAR-DROPPER FULL OF OCTA-HEXA-GLOP, AND...
YEAH, I'M VOTING FOR CAPTAIN KENTUCKY! WOTTA DEAL TO HAVE A SUPER-HERO MAYOR!
COME OFF IT! A SUPER-HERO FOR MAYOR? WOTTA SILLY IDEA! I'M VOTING FOR THE HAMBURGER MOGUL--NOW THERE'S MAYOR MATERIAL!
I'M THE 7% WHO IS ALWAYS UNDECIDED.
I'M THE 2% WHO HAS NO OPINION ON ACCOUNTA' MAN BRAIN IS MUSH?
I'M VOTING FOR HARVEY SLOANE!
GIMMEE DAT PURSE, LADY!? OR I'LL CUT WAFFI
SURE! IMAGINE ALL THE TAX MONEY HE'D SAVE! HE COULD PERSONALLY BUILD MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS IN MINUTES!
I'M STILL VOTING FOR SLOANE!
I CHOOSE PEPSI IN IMPARTIAL TASTE TESTS!
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY FOR MAYOR?
NOT NOW, HARRY... I HAVE A HEADACHE!
BAH! BAD FOR LABOR! I WON'T VOTE FOR NUTHIN' THAT TAKES A SINGLE CENT OUTTA' MY POCKET, I DON'T CARE HOW GOOD IT IS!
C.K. FOR MAYOR?
THINK OF HOW MUCH C.K. WILL SAVE ON AIR-LINE TICKETS! EVEN TO NEW ORLEANS!
I'M LATE! HURRY UP IN THE JOHN, WILLYA!
CONGRATULATIONS "BIG SPRINGS" SUBDIVISION! CAPTAIN KENTUCKY IS MOVING IN TODAY! (SEEN ALL THOSE ANTIQUE CARS DRIVING AROUND?) YOU NOW HAVE 24-HOUR SUPER-HERO SURVEILLANCE!
WELL, I PULLED IN A FEW EXTRANEOUS REMARKS PLUS I MUSTA' SPILLED A DROP OF GLOP ON MY TONGUE 'CAUSE SOME JERK IN THE HIGHLANDS WAS PUTTING CATSUP ON HIS EGGS BENEDICT. BLECH!
BUT, AS A WHOLE, I THINK VOTER SUPPORT IS SLOWLY SWINGING BACK TO SLOANE!
STILL, I MUST BE CERTAIN THAT I HAVE NO CHANCE OF WINNING! I MUST RESORT TO COMMITTING ABSOLUTE AND TOTAL POLITICAL SUICIDE!
THIS TRANSMITTOR ANTENNA ON THE HIGHEST POINT IN THE CITY WILL BROADCAST ME ALL OVER LOUISVILLE ON EVERY T.V., RADIO, AND HALF THE MICROWAVE OVENS! HERE GOES...
ZZZAK
IF ELECTED, I, CAPTAIN KENTUCKY, PROMISE THAT, IN 1983 I WILL THROW MY ENTIRE, UNLIMITED SUPPORT TOWARDS ELECTING THE RIGHT, HONORABLE WILLIAM STANSBURY AS GOVERNOR OF KENTUCKY!!!
THAT'LL KILL ME AS SURE AS GOD MADE LIL' GREEN APPLES! I'LL HAVE A LISTEN...
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
DID YOU HEAR THAT?
I WAS GOING TO VOTE FOR SLOANE, BUT NOW I'M GOING FOR C.K.!
FABULOUS? THAT WAS THE BEST POLITICAL GAG SINCE "BEDTIME FOR BONZO"!
HARRY! I SAID NOT NOW!
I'M DUMPING SLOANE! IT'S CAPTAIN KENTUCKY FOR MAYOR!
WHO DIDN'T? THAT WON MY VOTE! IF THERE'S ONE THING WE COULD REALLY USE, IT'S A MAYOR WITH SUCH A WRY SENSE OF HUMOR!
WHAT AN INGENIUS WIT!
THAT'S NOT FUNNY. THAT'S SICK!
THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT C.K. WILL GET MY VOTE!
EEEK! THERE'S A MIDGET IN MY MICROWAVE!
C.K.! LOUISVILLE COMMA YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A MAYOR!
AWRIGHT, KEEP YOUR PURSE, LADY! JUST STOP HITTIN' ME!
AND THE FOLLOWING MORNING...
?.....
The Courier-Journal
LANDSLIDE VICTORY!
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
NEXT WEEK: the Adventures of MAYOR KENTUCKY

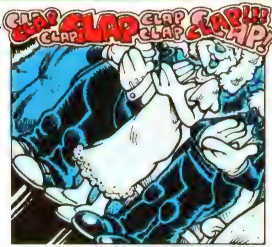
DICK DUCK, DUCK DICK

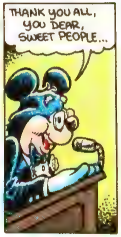
CASE # 419 A

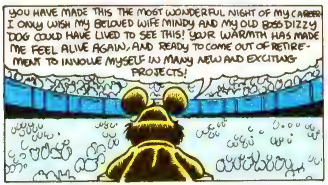
"HEROES & VILLAINS"
CHAPTER: 12

by Jim Engel ©1982

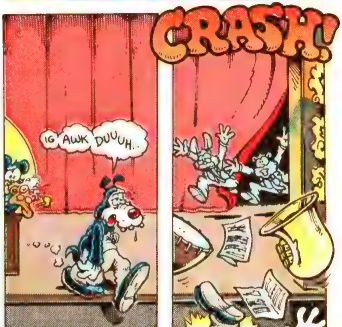




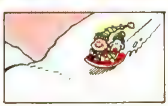


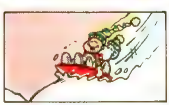

YOU HAVE MADE THIS THE MOST WONDERFUL NIGHT OF MY CAREER! I ONLY WISH MY BELOVED WIFE MINDY AND MY OLD BOSS DIZZY DOG COULD HAVE LIVED TO SEE THIS! YOUR WARMTH HAS MADE ME FEEL ALIVE AGAIN, AND READY TO COME OUT OF RETIREMENT TO INVOLVE MYSELF IN MANY NEW AND EXCITING PROJECTS!

IN A MOMENT, I WILL INTRODUCE YOU TO DAN O'SEAL, THE YOUNG MAN MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR MY RETURN TO PUBLIC LIFE, BUT FIRST, I WAS SURPRISED AND DELIGHTED TO LEARN THAT TWO OF MY MOST SPECIAL FRIENDS ARE HERE TONIGHT! I HAVEN'T SEEN EITHER OF THEM IN PERSON IN 25 YEARS! ONE JOINS US FROM HIS RETIREMENT HOME ON LAKE HANNAH, AND THE OTHER IS WITH US BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE INSTITUTION FOR SICK AND DISABLED MOTION PICTURE PERFORMERS. I GIVE YOU MY FORMER PARTNERS...



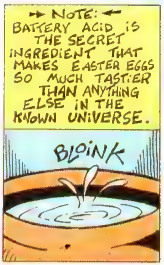
To be CONT.

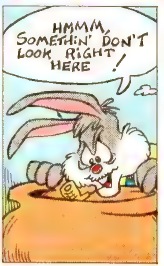


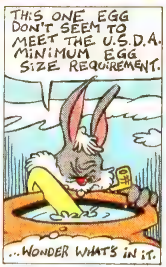


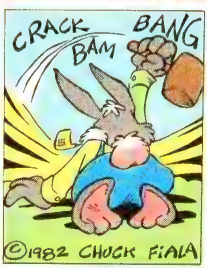
BULLET ★ ★ ★ FOWL OF FORTUNE CROW by CHUCK FIALA

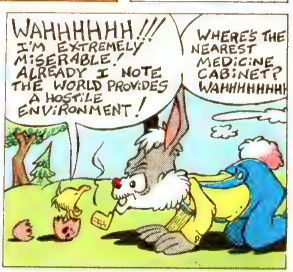
AND SO, (CONTINUING MY STORY) JUNIOR RABBIT, THE DUMBEST OF ALL EASTER BUNNIES..
"..MISPLACED THE TINY EGG AT A HIGH TRAJECTORY!
OOPS. I TRIPPED!

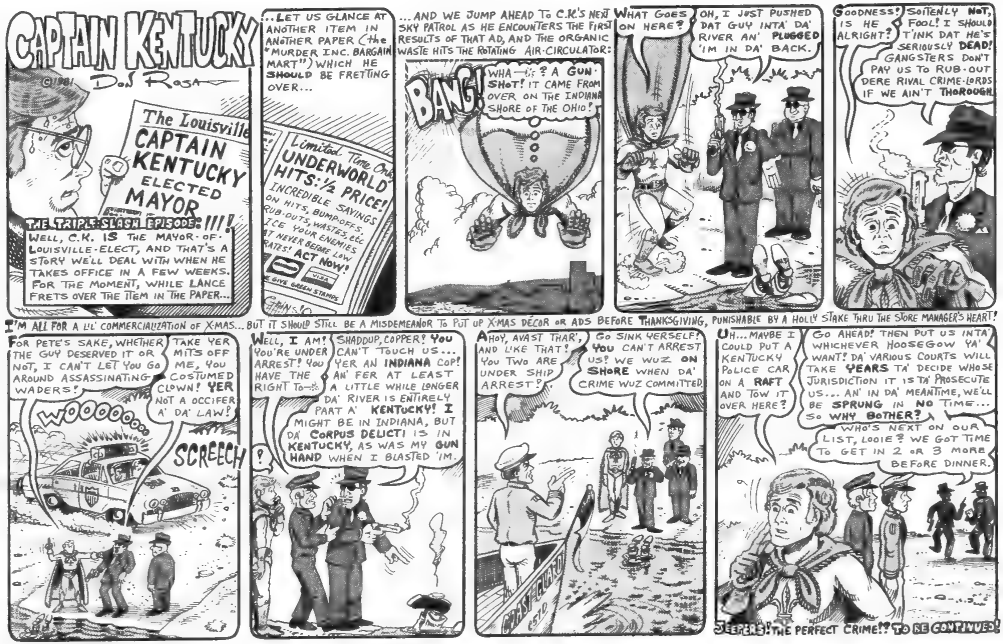

→ NOTE: ← BATTERY ACID IS THE SECRET INGREDIENT THAT MAKES EASTER EGGS SO MUCH TASTIER THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THE KNOWN UNIVERSE.
BLOINK








WAHHHHHH!!! I'M EXTREMELY MISERABLE! ALREADY I NOTE THE WORLD PROVIDES A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT!
WHERE'S THE NEAREST MEDICINE CABINET? WAHHHHHHHH!


CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
©1981 Don Rosa
The Louisville CAPTAIN KENTUCKY ELECTED MAYOR
THE TRIPLE-SLASH EPISODE!!!!
WELL, C.K. IS THE MAYOR-OF-LOUISVILLE-ELECT, AND THAT'S A STORY WE'LL DEAL WITH WHEN HE TAKES OFFICE IN A FEW WEEKS. FOR THE MOMENT, WHILE LANCE FRETS OVER THE ITEM IN THE PAPER...
...LET US GLANCE AT ANOTHER ITEM IN ANOTHER PAPER (THE "MURDER INC. BARGAIN MART") WHICH HE SHOULD BE FRETTING OVER...
Limited Time Only UNDERWORLD HITS: ½ PRICE!
INCREDIBLE SAVINGS ON HITS, BUMPOFFS, RUB-OUTS, WASTES, &c. TICK YOUR ENEMIES RATE!! NEVER BEFORE LOW RATES! ACT NOW!
GIVE GREEN STAMPS
...AND WE JUMP AHEAD TO C.K.'S NEXT SKY PATROL AS HE ENCOUNTERS THE FIRST RESULTS OF THAT AD, AND THE ORGANIC WASTE HITS THE ROTATING AIR-CIRCULATOR:
BANG
WHA—?! A GUN SHOT! IT CAME FROM OVER ON THE INDIANA SHORE OF THE OHIO!
WHAT GOES ON HERE?
OH, I JUST PUSHED DAT GUY INTA' DA' RIVER AN' PLUGGED 'IM IN DA' BACK.
GOODNESS! IS HE ALRIGHT?
SOLEMNLY NOT, FOOL! I SHOULD T'INK DAT HE'S SERIOUSLY DEAD! GANGSTERS DON'T PAY US TO RUB-OUT DERE RIVAL CRIME-LORDS IF WE AIN'T THOROUGH!
I'M ALL FOR A LIL' COMMERCIALIZATION OF X-MAS... BUT IT SHOULD STILL BE A MISDEMEANOR TO PUT UP X-MAS DÉCOR OR ADS BEFORE THANKSGIVING, PUNISHABLE BY A HOLLY STAKE THRU THE STORE MANAGER'S HEART!
FOR PETE'S SAKE, WHETHER THE GUY DESERVED IT OR NOT, I CAN'T LET YOU GO AROUND ASSASSINATING WADERS!
TAKE YER MITTS OFF ME, YOU COSTUMED CLOWN! YER NOT A OCCIFER A' DA' LAW!
WOOOOOOO
SCREECH
WELL, I AM! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST! YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO—
SHADDUP, COPPER! YOU CAN'T TOUCH US... YER AN INDIANA COP! AN' FER AT LEAST A LITTLE WHILE LONGER DA' RIVER IS ENTIRELY PART A' KENTUCKY! I MIGHT BE IN INDIANA, BUT DA' CORPUS DELICTI IS IN KENTUCKY, AS WAS MY GUN HAND WHEN I BLASTED 'IM.
?
AHOY, AVAST THAR, AND LIKE THAT! YOU TWO ARE UNDER SHIP ARREST!
GO SINK YERSELF! YOU CAN'T ARREST US! WE WUZ ON SHORE WHEN DA' CRIME WUZ COMMITTED
CORPUS DELICTI ESTD
UH... MAYBE I COULD PUT A KENTUCKY POLICE CAR ON A RAFT AND TOW IT OVER HERE?
GO AHEAD! THEN PUT US INTA' WHICHEVER HOOSEGOW YA' WANT! DA' VARIOUS COURTS WILL TAKE YEARS TA' DECIDE WHOSE JURISDICTION IT IS TA' PROSECUTE US... AN' IN DA' MEANTIME, WE'LL BE SPRUNG IN NO TIME... SO WHY BOTHER?
WHO'S NEXT ON OUR LIST, LOOIE? WE GOT TIME TO GET IN 2 OR 3 MORE BEFORE DINNER.
SEE PEERS! THE PERFECT CRIME!? TO BE CONTINUED!

Comics History

THE BACK-SEAT SUPER-HEROES
By Lou Mougin

PROLOGUE: 1966 and 1967 were financially the hottest years for comics years for comics heroes in the Second Heroic Age, due to the "camp" fad initiated by the BATMAN TV show. During this period many companies jumped on the super-heroic bandwagon with new lines of costumed heroes, all of which died out with the end of the fad in 1968. Among these were Tower and Charlton, who were covered in the first two parts of this article; Harvey, which we will examine in this installment; and Mighty and a handful of companies who boasted only one or two super-heroes apiece, which will be examined in the fourth and fifth parts. None of these minor-league creations, despite the promise shown by quite a few of them, ever matched the popularity of Marvel and DC heroes; hence Jim Steranko's label "the back-seat superheroes."

III. The Harvey Heroes

To some of us, Comic Book Trivia has become a High Art. The proof of this lies in the publication of THE POW! WHAM! ZAP! COMIC BOOK TRIVIA QUIZ, an over-sized paperback in which authors Michael Uslan and Bruce Solomon mine your trivia quotient with 1001 questions about super-heroes. For the most part, the book's quizzes are devoted to Marvel and DC heroes. (Who else is AROUND these days, anyway??)

Want to have some fun with a trivia "expert"? See how many die-hard comic buffs can handle THIS list of questions:

1. What was the name of the evil organization Spyman battled? What was this name an acronym for?

2. Name the super-group that appeared in UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS and identify three of its members.

3. What was Jack Quick-Frost's deadly weakness?

4. How did astronaut Barry E. Eames become the villainous B-Man?

If you flunked this quiz abysmally, don't feel too bad. The questions are based on one of the most obscure lines of super-hero comics in existence, the Harvey Thriller Group.

That's right, folks, the same company that gives you eleven different Richie Rich titles at this writing, the group that scooped supernatural heroes like the Spectre and Deadman with... Casper and Spooky?...was among the many comics groups who took a crack at the super-hero market in 1966. Harvey Comics unleashed a scattergun blast of seven new books, backed by their considerable financial punch and distribution power. Chances are that wherever you were in 1966, if you could find a comic rack there was at least one "Harvey Thriller" in it.

And only one of them ever made it to a third issue in its original format.

Most of the books were so bizarre that they could easily have won a special Funk Award from Carl Marcek and John Wooley for Esoteric Heroism. And yet, and yet...there WAS some talent in those comics, some outstanding stuff not obvious from those over-crowded, over-blurbed, overdrawn covers. They're still available from many large dealers, but fandom apparently knows little about them.

So, privileged ones, listen while we tell the little-known lore of the Harvey Back-seat Heroes. Attend, and gain trivial information available nowhere else today, hidden for sixteen long years. And then, when some smart guy slaps you with the question, "Where did Tiger Boy's parents originally come from?" you may confidently answer back, "Either from Jupiter or Venus, smart guy!"

Ask a fan today what Harvey Comics produces. Nine times out of ten, you'll get the same answer: Richie Rich. Sad Sack. Casper. Ever since the early fifties, this brand of fantasy-whimsy has been Harvey's bread and butter, initially prompted by Harvey's inheritence of the licensing rights to the Paramount cartoon characters from St. John (Casper, Little Audrey, Baby Huey et al.) eventually resulting in Harvey's purchase of the cartoon studio and all the characters. Chances are that the first fictional ghosts a child encounters will be one of Harvey's pseudo-spectres, like Spooky, the bederby'd, freckled, Jimmy Cagney-style "tuff little ghost" with a Brooklyn accent, or Hot Stuff, a pint-sized demon in diapers who runs around spitting fire and brandishing a pitchfork. (And you thought Daimon Hellstrom was original.) It's a territory Harvey has staked out completely, a genre which has made them a viable and surviving comic book company even in these troubled times of the early eighties.

But, long before the first silly-putty spook ever graced a Harvey page, the company was paying its dues as another Golden Age super-hero publisher. Modern fans will recognize their most famous creation, Lee Elias's super-sexy BLACK CAT. This archetypical femme crime-fighter debuted in a 1940 issue of SPEED COMICS and went on to a long and successful run in her own book. Harvey also adapted the legendary radio hero GREEN HORNET to the four-color medium. Other original Harvey heroes included Shock Gibson, Captain Freedom, the Girl Commandos and Stuntman. This last hero was the work of none other than Golden Age-comic kings Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, who worked extensively for Harvey in the wake of the super-heroes' downfall.

Harvey turned to horror in the 1950s with a VENGEANCE. Their covers for titles such as WITCHES' TALES were the most stomach-turning of all time. A gallery of full-color decapitated heads used as bell-clappers and kids whose face and hands were in the process of being burned clean of their flesh fronted some of their books. Fun stuff, indeed. The Comics Code rang down the curtain on this period in 1954. In the meantime, Simon and Kirby turned out minor classics for the line, including the famed "kid gang" books, BOY EXPLORERS and BOYS' RANCH, innumerable s.f.-fantasy stories, and the 3-D hero named--what else?--CAPTAIN 3-D.

About the time of the Code crackdown, Harvey seized on the funny-animal market. Or should that be a funny-GHOST market? CASPER, THE FRIENDLY GHOST, who had debuted in a series of Paramount cartoons, had run for five issues in a St. John comic published in 1949-1951. When St. John let the Paramount licensing lapse, Harvey picked it up bringing the Friendly Ghost out of limbo in '52. Since then, Casper and his fairy-tale friends have run continuously without a hitch, with Casper himself logging over three-hundred issues of his own comic with numerous annual spin-offs, and an entire phantom empire of comics has been built on his gravesite. Just as ARCHIE saved MLJ comics, Casper became the cornerstone for Harvey's super-success. And, like Archie, the gregarious ghostling seems virtually immortal...even though the over-killed Richie Rich has presently pushed him out of the limelight.

Even so, Harvey periodically put out feelers towards the post-pablum readership. BLACK CAT MYSTERY, a weird-story book taking over the numbering of BLACK CAT appeared periodically until 1958, with some notable work by Simon and Kirby, Bob Powell

© HARVEY FEATURES SYNDICATE

and Howard Nostrand. (In 1963, three issues of the book appeared as BLACK CAT in giant-size featuring reprints of the Black Cat's late '40s Lee Elias-drawn adventures.) Another mystery book, ALARMING TALES, featured six issues of similar stories, chiefly by Simon and Kirby. Again, in 1963 the book was revived in the form of ALARMING ADVENTURES, which ran three issues. The book featured superb science-fiction work by Al Williamson and Reed Crandall, and is highly recommended; quite a few of its stories were reprinted later on in Harvey's giant super-hero books. (Also reaching for the older audience were Harvey's two long-running comic strip-reprint books, DICK TRACY, which ran through 1961, and JOE PALOOKA, which ended in 1960.)

In 1965, Harvey gave the adventure market another try with a trio of summer one-shots: UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS, THRILL-O-RAMA and BLAST-OFF. All were books containing stories either published or prepared in the '50s. All cover-featured a "name" character. And all lasted in that form for only one issue apiece. In these books are found the roots of Harvey's 1966 super-hero stint, for they were headlined by THE MAN IN BLACK, TIGER BOY and THE THREE ROCKETEERS.

The bulk of UNEARTHLY #1 was taken up by four weird tales. The fifth was actually no different, being another science-fiction story entitled "Will Power." But the book needed a super-hero figure to plaster across the cover, so said cover depicted a tiger with a boy's head forming from the remains of a multi-eyed plant, about to spring on two hopelessly outclassed armed guards. (You think it SOUNDS weird? You ought to SEE it!) The blurb above the logo read, "We defy you to guess his amazing secret...TIGER BOY FROM TWILIGHT!"

"Will Power" oozed cliches common to most post-Code fantasy stories. Child prodigy Paul Canfield shows off mind-over-matter powers, including levitation, transmutation of a garden into gold, and the transformation of himself into an asbestos-skinned giant and, yes, a human-headed tiger. When the smug lad decides to rule the world with his powers, his parents reveal themselves as aliens from Jupiter with ridiculous rabbit-ear antennae, clock-face eyes and noses like hollow pipes. After promptly negating his powers, Paul's daddy explains, "25 years ago, we disagreed with Jupiter's rulers...so we were cast adrift in a space vehicle, exiled forever! We searched the universe for years...till we found this planet!" (Searching a whole universe to find a habitable planet in your own solar system sounds counter-productive at BEST.) "Do we remain as peaceful citizens...or must we seek out another planet where you can do no harm?"

Naturally, Paul agrees to lay off the cosmic hanky-panky until his second adventure, over a year later, in UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS #2. In this well-drawn Gil Kane five-pager, the all-Jovian boy foiled a bank robbery with all new powers. Not only could (and did) he become Tiger Boy, but when the occasion demanded, he changed into the robotic Steel Man and the elastic Rubberman, a la Robby Reed in DIAL "H" FOR HERO. In this go-round, his parents looked like giant insects, were described as "Venutian" on page four, and "from Jupiter" on page five, and confessed that Paul had a long-lost sister. When and if he met her, their powers would automatically do them both in. Luckily for Paul, the series ended with that issue.

THE MAN IN BLACK CALLED FATE, superior by far to Tiger Boy, led off the first issue of THRILL-O-RAMA with two fine reprints of Bob Powell work from the 1957-58 comic MAN IN BLACK. The hero, a black-cloaked, shadow-faced man in evening dress, introduced himself on page one:

"Greetings! I am the MAN IN BLACK! Some call me FATE...some KISMET...and others LUCK! But to YOU, I am the MAN IN BLACK! And I will show you the amazing part I play in YOUR life! These two lovely ladies," he said, gesturing to the Grecian-garbed beauties flanking him, "are Venus, the Goddess of Love, and the Weaver--she who weaves the patterns of life!"

"Stop yakking, M.B.," interjected Weaver, "And step into that little bit going on below...before Venus pokes her pretty nose into it and really gums it up!" In a four-panel scenario, we met a diamond cutter who had to split a gem perfectly or lose his life. Too infirm to attempt it, he shelved his hammer. The Man in Black gives the mallet a spectral nudge, sending it plunging towards the gem: "Huh? A PERFECT SPLIT!" Fate starred in two interesting comedy-dramas for that issue and backed up Pirana in issues #2 and 3 a year later.

Third in the 1965 triad, the THREE ROCKETEERS, was a Simon and Kirby period piece from the Sputnik era related to Kirby's later comic strip, SKY MASTERS in spirit and execution. The stories in the issue were unpublished tales prepared for the 1958 three-issue run of RACE FOR THE MOON, and the intro copy was strictly CAPTAIN VIDEO: "From the moon to Mars out to the distant stars you'll never find more courageous and exciting new heroes than these men of the space age! SGT. BEEFY BROWN--rugged, rowdy--but a right guy! CAPT. KIP McCOY--with an eye for adventure and a yen for action. FIGURES FARADAY--get in a jam--and he'll figure a way out of it with any scientific principle at hand!" And with those three stereotypes for a cast, S&K cranked out one story about two robot boxers and one about a movie starlet caught in a dimensional warp, the latter being inked by Al Williamson. In addition, this nifty little issue carried a two-page filler, "Danger: Atoms!" by Harvey Kurtzman, and two Williamson science-fiction yarns. It was quite a bargain at 12¢, and it's still worth the effort at whatever price it's pegged at today.

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Like the Man in Black and Tiger Boy, the Three Rocketeers were hauled out of the abyss for a second try in '66 as another back-up strip for UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS. Their first new saga in #2 was drawn by Mike Sekowsky and Frank Giacoia, the second, in #3, was the work of Bill Draut. After a two-page origin bit that brought the heroes together when McCoy crashed his ship into a space station (!), the threesome engaged in a pair of adventures with surprisingly interesting themes. The first dealt with a space battle kept in eternal stasis by a quirk of time, while the second briefly stranded the Rocketeers on a "Judgment Star" where two alien races, locked in futile combat, "are condemned to an eternal struggle...a struggle similar

to their crime...but where nobody wins and nobody loses! The battles we saw are sentences...just like jail sentences on Earth!" As nice as the concepts are, the art and writing, alas, were lacking.

The sales on the three try-outs were at least heartening enough for Harvey to have a go at the adventure market again a year later. By summer, 1966, the word was out: Super-heroes were the THING. BATMAN was the spearhead, followed by a horde of DC, Marvel, Tower, Charlton and Mighty heroes in the Long Underwear Derby. Thus, Harvey decided to launch its own line of super-heroes and hope for the best. Alumnus Joe Simon was put in charge of it, delivering up three new 12¢ comics (JIGSAW, SPYMAN and THRILL-O-RAMA), two 25¢ all-new giants (UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS and DOUBLE-DARE ADVENTURES) and two giant reprint titles (FIGHTING AMERICAN and THE SPIRIT). Jigsaw, Pirana, B-Man, Jack Quick Frost, Magicmaster, Miracles Inc., the Glowing Gladiator and Spyman made their debut. And by the beginning of 1967 they were all very, very dead.

The reasons for their early demise are are rather obvious from a brief glance at the books. Harvey apparently had NO EARTHLY IDEA of how to do a 1960s super-hero, nor did Joe Simon. Their writing level and concepts were still frozen in the 1950s vein (a condition that prevailed in later Simon books, such as GEEK and PREZ, and Jack Kirby's self-written titles to this very day). Plots were primitive. Dialogue was unbelievable. Art was competent, but rarely more than that. Featured characters were rendered by artists like Jack Sparling, George Tuska and Dick Ayers. The stories were simplified to the point of talking down to the reader, and the books used the same format as a Casper-genre funnybook: a first-page teaser intro, a second page of ads, and the third page beginning the main story. In addition, text pages (probably written by the same people who did the job for Casper and Nightmare) featuring the heroes filled out the issues, and secondary features of a "humorous" nature were added. These were generally written by Otto Binder, and they worked out about as well as most attempts at camp in comics did: they didn't. "Letters pages" featured messages to the readers from the featured characters, starting with notes from Spyman and B-Man all the way down to communiques from Pirana's two pet barracudas. In the 1950s, Harvey might have gotten away with it. In the Marvel Age of Comics or DC's Silver Age, they never had a chance.

Still, some of the concepts were solid, and the occasional gem among the germs make the Harvey Back-seaters worth looking into. Also, Jim Steranko began his comics career designing and scripting a few of the heroes (which ones have never been truly revealed). And there's always the famed reprint books of FIGHTING AMERICAN and THE SPIRIT. So, let's begin our backwards glancing with a look at the most long-lived (three issues) of the Harvey Thrillers, SPYMAN.

If Alex Schomberg was still doing covers for comics in 1966, he could have done the one that graced SPYMAN #1. Joe Simon didn't miss a trick. The red-garbed Spyman, chained by his feet to an atomic bomb on wheels (clearly labeled, "Danger--ATOM"), worked feverishly with one hand to disarm it while with the other hand he punched out one of three flying, armed, green cloaked spies, two of whose comrades were pushing the bomb towards the edge of a skyscraper roof. "I've got to disarm this bomb before it destroys the city!" he declared, helpfully clarifying things for the enemy agents. Meantime, a large red arrow pointing to the bomb explained, "WARNING TO CIVILIANS: Never! Never! Never touch a radio-active bomb! (There is only one electro-robot hand on hand!)" Thanks, guys...we NEEDED to know that.

In his origin story (plotted by Jim Steranko, if not actually written by him), Johnny Chance, agent of the super-secret American spy group LIBERTY (headquartered, quite naturally, in the Statue of Liberty), is indeed chained to an atomic by agents of the Evil Organization MIRAGE. "Only one way to disarm it, muses Chance as the seconds tick away. "Remove the radio-active core! But with what? My hands?" You betcha. In three panels, the red-uniformed agent plunges his left mitt down into the guts of the bomb and pulls out a vital component. His hand burns off down to the wrist.

The cavalry arrives in the form of more LIBERTY agents who pack up Chance and cart him off to LIBERTY H.Q. There he is cured and given a plastic-and-metal mechanical hand chock-full of deadly devices. (The hand, diagrammed on the cover and on page one, was loaded to the fingernails with an x-ray, a blaster, a tape recorder, a magnet, a camera and a black light ray. And as if that wasn't enough, in #2 Spyman was loaded down with a gunbelt full of snap-on plastic fingers!!!) Meanwhile, we're unsubtly introduced to the cast of supporting characters: Dr. Norman Vane, stereotyped white-coated scientist figure; the blonde ingenue, Diana Erikson, a code expert; and fellow goodguy Mike Pierce. Soon, we learn of the villain of the piece, the Whisperer, a hooded, green-clad fiend who...well...WHISPERS a lot. "He is the head of the secret organization dedicated to world domination by terror...MIRAGE, the Empire of Guerrilla Assassination, Revenge and International Menace!" explained an enemy agent. Having a backwards acronym for a name seemed to ensure a twisted mind in the villainry...or the scripter.

After the Whisperer attempts to poison the hero, and the hand fails said attempt while Chance is ASLEEP, the LIBERTY handyman displays his powers before the taken governmental higher-ups. "With the powers you hold in your hand, you'll be an invincible SPYMAN!" allows a general. And, after another round of fun and games, Spyman pulls an Ellery Queen bit by assembling all the suspects in a room and declaring, "The Whisperer is none other than...Diana Erikson! By whispering, we never guessed that it was a girl's voice, instead of a man's!" As fate and spy movie cliches would have it, the she-villain goes out in a blaze of glory when her own bomb blows up her escape craft. "We must never rest until our shores are safe from those like MIRAGE, who would seek to enslave free men!" sums up SPYMAN. "We shall ever be on guard!"

Spyman stood guard duty for two more issues, which saw him destroy Cyclops, a hideous baddie with a giant death-dealing eye for a head ("It was truly a case of the hand being faster than the eye!") and the Id Machine, a monstous robot computer. Following #1's art by George Tuska were Dick Ayers in #2, with Bill Draut HANDling #3. After that, Spyman faded off into super-hero limbo, probably to take up glove manufacture or some such.

PIRANA debuted the same month in THRILL-O-RAMA #2 with another George Tuska cover. This time, the scene depicted a blond-haired hero in a green wetsuit jamming a rotund, red-uniformed, red-eyed villain up against the conning tower of a submarine. The bad guy, whose oversized pate was surrounded by a nimbus of electrical energy ("Snap! Crackle! Pop!") sneered "Let's see who holds out longer, Pirana ...I happen to know you can't live long when you're out of water!" In the background, a ship clearly labeled "Coast Guard" sank into the briny deep while survivors (the only part of the cover which belies Tuska's pencils; Joe Simon's inks are quite overwhelming) floundered. The cover copy blared, "Listen! Do you hear the SNAP! CRACKLE! POP! ...No, it's not static...it's that big, ugly, scheming brain calling you...threatening the world...it's BRAINSTORM! The Thinking Man's Villain"

Well, folks, I confess, I tried. But even today, sixteen years later...

Harvey Comics Index

The Harvey Thrillier group was published by Alfred, Leon and Robert B. Harvey, and edited (circa 1965-67) by Joe Simon. This index includes only the serious-themed titles published during the sixties; post-Code issues of BLACK CAT MYSTIC, RACE FOR THE MOON, ALARMING TALES, MAN IN BLACK, WARFRONT, DICK TRACY and JOE PALOOKA are not included.

Same, if not all, of the writing may have been done by Joe Simon himself. More than likely, heretofore unrevealed scripters working for other companies pitched in on the uncredited stories. It is unlikely, but possible, that Harvey staff scripters from the humor line did the writing.

BLACK CAT

63, October 1962 Cover: Joe Simon
- **"Flames Over Hollywood" (7)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #28
- "The Black Cat Adopts a Kitten" (4)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #28
- "A Day in the Life of Linda Turner" (2) (Cleopatra)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "The Crimson Raider" (10)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #28
- "Mistaken Identity" (4)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "Jungle Danger" (8)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "Perils of Linda Turner" (8)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "A Day in the Life of Linda Turner" (4) (Hollywood Bowl) Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "Obviously, the Sceptre" (8)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?

FILLER: Judo Tricks (6; one-pagers); The Farewell Note (1) text; Who Is the Black Cat? (1) Lee Elias; The Warrior (1) text, not Black Cat

64, January 1963 Cover: Joe Simon
- **"Ghost of Blasco" (14)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "Linda Turner Goes to a Party" (2) (with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "Skull Island Beasts" (12)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "The Circus Vandals" (6)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "A Day With the Black Cat" (2) (Jungle sequence)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "A Day With the Black Cat" (2) (Linda meets the Black Cat)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?, also reprinted in BLACK CAT WESTERN #55
- "The Fighting Bulls" (8)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "A Day With Linda Turner" (2) (kitten in tree)
  - Art: Lee Elias
- "Island of Perils" (8)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?

FILLER: Judo Tricks (6; one-pagers) Lee Elias reprints; What Makes Her Fight? (1) Elias REPRINT; Fangs of Terror (1) text; Guns Speak Loudly (1) text (non-Black Cat story)

65, April 1963 Cover: Joe Simon
- "Black Magic" (10)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "Sun Valley Treachery" (8)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- **"The Queen of Cats" (10)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- A Day With Linda Turner "Funny Business at the Fair" (4)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "The Phony Crusade" (8)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?
- "Crimson Madness" (10)
  - Art: Lee Elias from BLACK CAT COMICS #?

FILLER: Cast of Characters (1) Lee Elias REPRINT; Judo Tricks (5; one-pagers); Native Uprising (1) text; How Good a Detective Are You? (Death of Warren Chalmers) (1) Bob Powell REPRINT (non-Black Cat)

ALARMING ADVENTURES

1, October 1962 Cover: John Severin
- Title Page (1) Bernard Baily
- **"The Lost Acre" (5)
  - Art: Bernard Baily
- "The Night Vistor" (2)
  - Art: Dick Ayers
- "The Aliens" (5)
  - Art: Marvin Stein
- "Hermit" (5)
  - Story: Archie Goodwin Art: Reed Crandall/ Al Williamson
- "The Silent Street" (5)
  - Art: George Tuska

FILLER: text (2)

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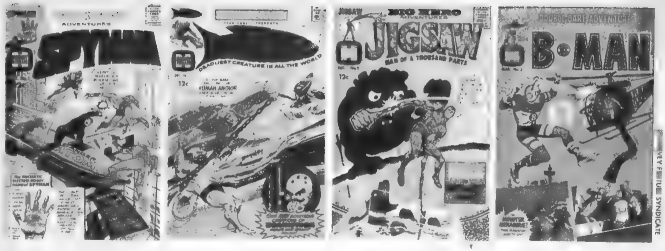
2, December 1962 Cover: John Severin
- Title Page (1) Angelo Torres?
- "The Failure" (5)
  - Art: Angelo Torres?
- "Sunken Treasure" (2)
  - Art: Paul Reinman
- **"Trapped in the Human Aquarium" (5)
  - Art: Al Williamson
- "Space Hobo" (5)
  - Art: Bob Powell



I still can't HEAR the Snap! Crackle! Pop!

Both of Pirana's outings were drawn by Jack Sparling. A two-page origin sequence went thusly: Marine scientist Edward Yates is testing a new membrane which lets air-breathers absorb oxygen from water when the inevitable Fateful Accident occurs as an eclectric shock alters his metabolism. Now unable to breathe air, Yates must absorb oxygen from water. "H-how will I survive?" muses the incipient Aquaman. "I'll be just a little 'fish' among monsters in the sea! Unless I'm as strong as my pet piranha pound for pound...I'm sunk...OF COURSE! THAT'S IT!"

And, as surely as if that piranha had flapped in through an open window, Yates set to work. With water tanks firmly strapped to his back and his feet outfitten with jet-flippers for propulsion through sea and sky alike, the Pirana was off and dripping.

Accompanied by his two pet barracudas, Bara and Cuda, the Pirana begins a two-issue war against his nemesis Brainstorm. Said villain proves to be a deposed South American dictator whose brain is so poweful it sends electrical charges through the air. (Yep--they go "Snap! Crackle! Pop!") Holding forth from his sub, the CRANIUM, Brainstorm commands a gang of nasties straight out of a Saturday morning puppet show. The group includes Murderina Mermaid, a half-fish lady android who looked like an Italian wrestler and was bulky and strong enough to immobilize a ship by holding it with a chain; and Chief Ooz, a French fiend who bred killer parpoises long before DAY OF THE DOLPHIN. The second issue endec forever on a cliffhanger, as Pirana swam anxiously homeward tp a reunion with his mermaid sweetie...who was busily sharpening four-inch razor-sharp talons.

But, on reflection, maybe there were factors we didn't know about regarding Pirana's demise. After all, they could have been sued by Kellogg's Rice Krispies.

Let us withhold judgment, be charitable, and progress on to the next member of the Harvey pantheon. JIGSAW, a Mr. Fantastic/Plastic Man copycat, survived for a pair of issues drawn by the inimitable Tony Tallarico (possibly with Bill Fraccio--you do remember Charlton's 1965 BLUE BEETLE, don't you?) Here's the story:

During an orbit around Earth in a space capsule, astronaut Gary Jason finds himself caught up in the force-beams emanating from "a--a gigantic shape'...a cone...magnetizing objects from the Siberian land-mass below... into space!" Yanked through outer space towards the moon at hyper speed, the spacecraft is punched through and through by a fossilized tree (!) picked up by the beam. Jason is injured and pulled out into the magnetic stream (conveniently filled with air) which whisks him to its ultimate source, an alien outpost on the moon. Luckily, the aliens (robotoid forms of life resembling leftovers from Tupperware party) are friendly and skilled enough in medicine to tape and paste Jason's broken bones back together again. "We are studying your planet," explains alien leader Si-Krell. "When the time is right our worlds will meet." Jason extends a hand in thanks...and it stretches clear across the room. "Ah!" nods Si-Krell sagely. "A reaction from the operation!"

With a "grip of steel" and the powers of putty, Jason returns to Earth, rounds up a passel of escaped circus animals, and then gets hauled back up to the moon for a special assignment from his Krell benefactors. Si-Krell introduces Jigsaw to the villains of the piece, the evil, ravaging Pulots: "Soon they will discover Earth...and ravage it also! Incredible power units protect them! There is only one way... espionage!" So, accompanied by a ravishing blonde Pulotian traitress, Jigsaw infiltrates a Pulot power station and blows the place to smithereens after wiping out the guards Plastic Man-fashion. "You have made the first dent in Pulotian armor, Earthman!" commends Si-Krell. "You must call him JIGSAW," admonished the girl. So much for origins.

In the next issue, Jigsaw represents Earth in an "interplanetary olympics," for, as Si-Krell puts it, "Since we repaired your body you have become FAMED throughout the galaxy!" Well, maybe so, but in the U. S. he was kinda LAME... This rather silly story, pitting the hero against a two-legged, armless red blob,-marked the last issue of JIGSAW. Small wonder.

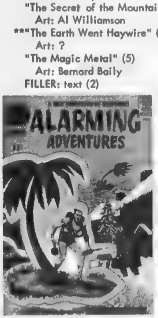
In addition to their 12¢ comics, Harvey boasted two giant-sized 25¢ super-hero books. Each issue of these had three "name" heroes and a handful of featurettes and reprints, making them real bargains for a quarter. The first of these, DOUBLE-DARE ADVENTURES, was headlined by the Harvey hero who WASN'T, the one-and-only B-MAN.

B-Man's origin story wasn't any fun whatsoever. In fact, for painful origins, only the Spectre can go him one better. After hijacking a Martian meteorite, astronaut Barry E. Eames (note those initials) gloats, "The space big shots will have to pay me BIG if they want to know what's INSIDE her!" We found out in short order. The damn thing cracks open and a horde of giant bees swarms out to sting the living daylights out of him! Two days later, Eames is found wandering about in a zombie-like state and is packed off to a local hospital where he recuperates. "Strange!" remarks one doctor. "His heartbeat is triple the pace of a normal one...but it doesn't seem to be hurting him! Whatever happened to this man, it changed his whole body chemistry!"

Eames gets a "buzz" summons from the meteorite, escapes from the hospital and climbs inside the hollow shell, which closes about him and whisks him into space. (Harvey writers seemed to have a thing about space-born origins.) After landing on Mars's moon Deimos, Eames encounters a race of insectoid beings who bred the giant worker bees within the meteorite. "And now their venom is in your veins, Earthling,"

"New Star" (5)
Art: Bob Powell
FILLER: text (2)

3, February 1963 Cover: John Severin
Title Page (1) Bernard Baily
"The Big Storm" (5)
Art: Bernard Baily
"A Moving Performance" (2)
Art: Dick Ayers
"The Secret of the Mountain" (5)
Art: Al Williamson
**"The Earth Went Haywire" (5)
Art: ?
"The Magic Metal" (5)
Art: Bernard Baily
FILLER: text (2)



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UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS

1, October, 1965 Cover: Jack Sparling
Title Page (1) Sparling
"The Visitor" (5)
Art: Doug Wildey
"Old Wives Tale" (2)
Art: Angelo Torres
"Unbelievable Story" (5)
Art: ?
**Tiger Boy "Will Power" (5)
Art: Doug Wildey
"The Hidden World" (5)
Art: Doug Wildey
FILLER: text (2)

2, December, 1966 Cover: Joe Simon, Jack Sparling, Wally Wood (three separate sections)
Title Page (1) Sparling (Kane)
**Jack Quick Frost "The Ice Prison" (2: "Back To Life"; 3: "The Showdown") (15)
Art: Jack Sparling
Piranha (preview) (2)
Art: Jack Sparling
Clawfang "Introduction" (2)
Art: Al Williamson from THRILL-O-RAMA #2
"Clawfang the Barbarian" (5)
Art: Al Williamson
Tiger Boy and Company "The Boy Who Hates Us All" (5)
Art: Gil Kane
Title Page (1) Mike Sekowsky/Frank Giacoia, Wood
"Miracles, Inc." (5)
Art/story: Wally Wood
3 Rocketeers "How The 3 Rocketeers Teamed Up" (5)
Art: Mike Sekowsky/Joe Giella
"Super Surplus" (2)
Art: Carl Pfeufer
"Earthman" (10)
Art/story: Wally Wood
FILLER: text (2)

3, March, 1967 Cover: Joe Simon
Title Page:(1) Bill Draut
**Jack Quick Frost "Lord Lazee's Terrible Trio" (2: The Doom Wave Strikes") (15)
Art: Bill Draut
"The Sauceter" (2)
Art: Carl Pfeufer
"Hermit" (5)
Story: Archie Goodwin Art: Reed Crandall/Al Williamson from ALARMING ADVENTURES #1
"Logan's Next Life" (2)
Art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from ALARMING TALES #1
"Never Say 'No' To Dr. Yes" (5)
Art: Tony Tallarico
Title page (1) Joe Orlando
Miracles, Inc. "Rent-a-Hero" (2: "The Gong Gang Strikes"; 3: "Kaput-Prince of Jinx") (17)
Art: Joe Orlando
3 Rocketeers "1...2...3...Infinity" (5)
Art: Bill Draut
FILLER: text (4)

THRILL-O-RAMA

1, October, 1965 Cover: Joe Simon
Title Page (1) Bob Powell
**The Man In Black Called Fate "The Hate Cupids" (8) Art: Bob Powell
"Six Hours of Doom" (5)
Art: Carl Pfeufer?
"When Time Ran Out" (5)
Art: Doug Wildey
"The Old Hulk" (5)
Art: Doug Wildey
FILLER: text (2)

2, September 1966 Cover: George Tuska/Joe Simon
Title Page (1) Jack Sparling
***Pirana" (2: "A New Life of Danger"; 3: "Doomsday in Davey Jones' Locker") (15)
Art: Jack Sparling
Clawfang: "Introduction" (2)
Art: Al Williamson
The Man In Black Called Fate "The Million Dollar Trap" (5)
Art: Jack Sparling
FILLER: text (2)

3, December 1966 Cover: Jack Sparling
Title page (1) Jack Sparling
**Pirana "The Escape of Brainstorm" (2: "Death Kiss in the Deep"; 3: "Fish in the Iron Masks")(15)
Art: Jack Sparling
"My Pal, Alien" (2)
Art: Carl Pfeufer
The Man In Black Called Fate "The Weaver" (5)
Art: Jack Sparling
FILLER: text (2)

explains a general. "You have their powers!" The Bee, as he comes to be called, is outfitted with a protective costume, antennae that project sonic bursts, powerful insect wings, a drug-tipped stinger and "vapor-honey grenades that puts [sic] attackers to sleep instantly! I'm ready...to return and raid Earth!" And for the last three pages of the tale, that's just what B-Man does, while putting the whup on the U.S. Army. His only weakness was that he went limp if he didn't get a daily fix of honey. (Now, would I make up a thing like that?)

A two-page text feature immediately followed. Entitled "The Bee Line," the story told of B-Man's interruption of a TV program to explain his motives to the world:

> THE BEE paused here, then with an expression of grim scorn, he continued. "My worthy deeds will force all Earthlings to surrender to my SUPERIOR WORLD. Many of your great scientists have predicted that ONE DAY INSECTS WILL RULE THE EARTH. You laughed and called them crazy, but I shall prove that they were RIGHT. The day is not far away when INSECTS WILL INDEED RULE THE HUMANS OF EARTH. You will become our slaves and solve many of our problems--one of which is labor. The entire human race, what is left of it that is, will become SLAVES TO MY RACE. You will fulfill the duties of our 'worker bees.' You will become MY SLAVES. Any questions?"
>
> The program announcer cried out, "YES, I'm sure we have many things to ask THE BEE about. I'll call upon our studio audience!"

Wonder what their ratings were the next week? Or what prices the scalpers were asking for studio tickets?

In the second issue of DOUBLE-DARE, a Dick Ayers-drawn story (Bill Draut had done the first) saw B-Man return to Deimon, where he met the beautiful Queen Bea (1). After she discloses her plans to conquer Earth with his help, the Bee rebels, runs for home, gets invited into the F-Bee-I (that's the way they spelled it, folks)--they must have missed that TV show in the next story--and starts cleaning up on crooks. Deimonsians destroy B-Man's cache of honey, but Yankee Ingenuity saves the day: J. Edgar's science-boys dream up a synthetic honey concentrate to snap the rampaging Bee back to normal. As derivative as the two-shot strip was (much lifted, seemingly, from Archie's FLY MAN), B-Man wasn't that bad for a Harvey hero, and showed a little promise as a continuing feature. At least as much as a guy with fifty plastic fingers or a rubberman secret agent from outer space.

The fellow who doubled the dare in DOUBLE-DARE was introduced on the first page of issue #1, charging full-throttle with sword upraised and wearing enough detailed weaponry to make Deathlok the Demolisher envious. A caption read, "If you can take the thrills and excitement of a journey into the tomb of ancient Egyptian gods...or the return to life, before your very eyes, of a fighting man of 2000 years ago--then you have taken us up on a DOUBLE-DARE--for you have seen--in LIVING COLOR--THE GLOWING GLADIATOR!"

His first tale, "Legend of the Glowing Gladiator," seems to be the work of Bob Powell (Jack Sparling took over in issue #2). But the unconventional layouts may be the work of Jim Steranko. At any rate, in the first panel proper of the story, Captain Kidd himself breaks into a museum and rips off an ancient chalice to deliver it to a sinister enthroned figure wearing conquistador's armor--"the man known only as Destiny." The inscription cut into the chalice's surface betrays the location of the fabled, power-granting Amulet of Hannibal. How does Destiny propose to locate the amulet? Well, after giving the time-lost Kidd a day off, he lets his fingers do the walking through the Yellow Pages, looks up ADVENTURE, UNLIMITED, and hires chief trouble-shooter Harry Barker to go to Carthage to fetch it.

Upon his arrival in the post-DELINDA ruins of Carthage, Barker fortuitously falls through a crumbling chamber roof into "The Room of Eternal Dedication." At the top of a golden staircase, the Amulet hands from a display. But as Barker stares into the depths of the gem, he finds himself drawn within it to stand "face to face with his exact self!"

"Welcome, my friend!" hails the replicate, clad in armor, breastplate and arm guard and brandishing a sword. "Long have I waited for this moment. I am the one men call Hannibal...Hannibal of Barca!"

The spectral warrior bequeaths to Harry Barker the Sword of Hercules. "It is the ultimate weapon, for by mere mental command, it has the power to change into any form of armament!" Then, after endowing Barker with the armor, Hannibal hands over the Amulet last of all. "My spirit lives in this amulet! If you wish upon the amulet, I shall grant my weapons the power you ask of them..." And, as the amulet is hung about the adventurer's neck, "the two figures dissolve like shadows and in their place stands a tall silhouette clad in golden armor!"

Following on this origin sequence (one of Harvey and Steranko's best), the story rapidly simplified as the Gladiator foiled Destiny's anachronistic thugs (Dillinger and the James Gang) in their attempt to rob a bank. Destiny and his new-found antagonist have it out, ending in the villain's leaping into his time machine and vanishing an instant before Gladiator's sword shattered the mechanism. Despite some touches of mediocrity, Gladiator somehow seemed to have potential as a second-string super-hero. By issue #2, however, the Powell art was gone, replaced by journeyman artist Jack Sparling. Destiny became a wise-cracking satyr much less interesting than his former incamation. But the story was brightened by the intro of Destiny's "good side," a beautiful brunette who aided Gladiator. "I too am Destiny!" she explained. "And I am deadly...but deadly only to the other Destiny...the evil one...your arch enemy!"

The last two panels held another nice sequence. In panel one, Gladiator looks toward Destiny's outstretched lifeless hand. After he turns away, Destiny's hand quivers back to life. "Indeed the Gladiator should beware...because Destiny can die...and die...and DIE! I'm a cool cat...with nine HUNDRED lives!" Thus ended one of Harvey's most interesting hero strips.

But DOUBLE-DARE boasted a THIRD main attraction, making the title a misnomer. (TRIPLE-DARE, though, seems to lack something...) "From ageless Egypt, where Magic began, comes the shadowy figure of the SORCERER to dispel the presence of evil and triumph over the supernatural. Let us now begin our strange tale and discover...THE SECRET OF MAGICMASTER!"

This was Jim Steranko's third and last creation for Harvey. (Two other proposed concepts never came to be: FUTURE AMERICAN and SPACEWOLF. See Bart Bush's HARVEY COLLECTORS' NEWSLETTER #4 for Jim Korkis's article

WARFRONT

36, October 1965 Cover: Joe Simon?
Title Page (1) George Tuska
"Ghost Army" (5)
Art: Marvin Stein
"American Heroes" (1)
Art: Dan Adkins
"Duty: Occupation" (1)
Art: Bob Powell
Corporal Daniels in the Lion's Den "Warhead" (5)
Art: Angelo Torres?
Bob Scott, the One-Guy Task Force "The Big Ride"(6)
Art: Charles Nicholas/George Roussos
**Dynamite Joe "Make 'Em Pay" (5)
Art: Bob Powell?
FILLER: text (1)

37, September 1966 Cover: Jack Sparling
Title page (1) Wally Wood
**Dynamite Joe "One-Way Street" (5)
Art: Jack Sparling
"The V-3" (2)
Art: The Wood Studio
"The Lone Tiger" (10)
Art: Wally Wood
"Dollar Bill" Cash" (5)
Art: Wally Wood
FILLER: text (2)

38, December 1966 Cover: Joe Simon
Title Page (1) Bill Draut
**Dynamite Joe "Big Trap on Death Island" (2: "The Secret of Half-Mask; 3: "The Human Bait For the Big Trap on Death Island") (15)
Art: Bill Draut
"Beyond Courage" (2)
Art: Wood Studio
Lone Tiger "The Tiger vs. the Dragon" (5)
Art: George Roussos
FILLER: text (2)

39, February 1967 Cover: Bill Draut
Title page (1) Bill Draut
**Dynamite Joe "Half-Mask Strikes Back" (2: "Watch the Birdie-- Die"; 3: "Stare Into the Face of Half-Mask") (15)
Art: Bill Draut
"The Trap" (3)
Art: the Wood Studio
Lone Tiger "Revenge of the Dragon" (5)
Art: George Roussos
FILLER: text (2)

BLAST-OFF

1, October 1965 Cover: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
Title Page (1) Jack Kirby/Al Williamson from RACE FOR THE MOON #3
3 Rocketeers "Lunar Goliaths (5)
Art: Jack Kirby/Al Williamson
"Danger! Atoms!" (2) Kurtzman? Simon?
**3 Rocketeers "The Great Moon Mystery" (5)
Art: Jack Kirby/Al Williamson
"The Space Court" (5)
Art: Al Williamson
"The Little Earth" (5)
Art: Al Williamson
FILLER: text (2)

JIGSAW

1, September 1966 Cover: Bill Draut
Title Page (1) Joe Simon, Tony Tallarico
**Jigsaw "A Nightmare in Space" (2: "A Puzzle For Jigsaw"; 3: "Space Agent To The Stars") (16)
Art: Tony Tallarico (and Bill Fraccio?)
"Introducing: Super Luck" (2)
Art: ?
"The Boys From Up There" (5)
Art: Reed Crandall
FILLER: text (2)

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2, December 1966 Cover: Joe Simon
Title page (1) Tony Tallarico
**Jigsaw "Interplanetary Olympics" (2: Battle of the Death Walk -- New York, U.S.A."; 3: Wanted! Dead or In Pieces") (17)
Art: Tony Tallarico
The Man From S.R.A.M. "Madhouse in Hollywood"(5)
Art: Carl Pfeufer
FILLER: text (2)

SPYMAN

1, September 1966 Cover: George Tuska
Title page (1) Jim Steranko/George Tuska
**Spyman "The Birth of a Hero" (2: "In Liberty's Stronghold"; 3: "At the Mercy of the Whisperer"; 4: "How to Unmask a Villain") (20)
Story: Jim Steranko Art: George Tuska
Inks: Carl Pfeufer on pages 11-20

which outlines Steranko's character concepts for Spyman, the Gladiator, the Sorcerer, which became Magic-master, and the two aforementioned rejected characters.) Based on Steranko's longtime fascination with magic and stage magicians, the stories in #1 and 2, both drawn by Jack Sparling, were tame even for a Harvey comic. To avenge his musician father's murder, little Jimmy summons Shamarah, "magician of the gods," back to life. ("Editor's note: PLEASE DO NO ATTEMPT TO REPEAT THIS INCANTATION AS WE CANNOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONSEQUENCES!") After the blue-skinned wizard and his kid sidekick dispatch the murderer, Magicmaster towers over Jimmy in a reprise of the Robin origin bit. "I will teach you, as I have Merlin, Circe and Cagliostro! There is so much evil in the world today. Perhaps I should remain to suppress it!" "We'll do it together," piped up Jimmy. And so they did, with time out each issue for two-page "magic" lessons. The lessons were as forgettable as the stories.

Still, both issues of DOUBLE-DARE ADVENTURES remain well worth the collector's while. Both #1 and 2 contain high-quality filler stories reprinted from Harvey's fine science-fiction books of 1963. #1 boasts a whacko Simon and Kirby reprint, while #2 offers weird tales by Paul Reinman and Al Williamson along with an unusual little featurette called "The Prisoner of Plastic City" by Hy Eisman. These 25-centers are relatively cheap and deserving of attention.

But when it comes to quality, no original title in the Harvey line ever touched UNEARTHLY SPECTACULARS. This book had its share of mundane stories, but it also held Harvey's few sparks of real glory. New and old strips by Wood, Williamson, Crandall, Kane and Kirby make this title a MUST for any back-seat buff. Still, the headline feature was a typically unimaginative long-underwear type yclept JACK QUICK FROST, so we'll deal with him first.

Jack debuted in issue #2 (issue #1, as pointed out before, featured TIGER BOY). Secret Agent James Flynn of the ICA (International Counter-intelligence Agency--but of course!) is sent to the North Pole to intercept some enemy agents building a missile site. Flynn blows the mission, gets captured and is tossed into the ice cold waters. His body freezes into suspended animation a la Captain America. An "undersea atomic test" at the polar ice cap oh-so-conveniently blows open the iceberg he is stored in, and the frosty-fresh hero emerges with freezing powers.

Flynn thaws out just in time to foil the foibles of a fiend with a girth that would make Haystacks Calhoun a shrimp by comparison. The nasty, named "Lord Lazee," is a criminal genius who moves with the aid of a robotic chair. After one duel, the villain rages, "My pet robot, ruined by this...this Jack B. Quick Frost!" In the second adventure, we learned that Jack's fatal weakness was dry ice, which "acts like super-heat on my frozen body!" The strip was no no better nor worse than its contemporaries. The art in #2 was by Jack Sparling, while #3 was by Bill Draut. The writer, who probably was doing the lead features in the three 12¢ books as well, knew better than to reveal himself.

But, following a two-page plug for PIRANA, the book took an abrupt upward turn in quality. For the next story introduced the very first barbarian strip of the 1960s, with art by Al Williamson! A two-page intro recounted the rise and fall of a future civilization, from interplanetary conquest through nuclear war, mutation and the return to barbarism. "This, then, is the world of our story... old, yet new, dying, and being reborn. It is a lawless, brutal world. There are no heroes and no villains, just men and animals pitted against each other in a savage struggle for survival. This is a world for the strong, the swift, and the ruthless...THIS IS THE WORLD OF CLAWFANG, THE BARBARIAN!"

In seven exquisitely-drawn pages, Clawfang debuts, being a brawny, savage raider resplendent in a hood and cloak of wolves' fur, reminiscent of Buscema's Conan. Clawfang's small band is caught in an ambush at the beginning of the tale; his followers annihilated, the barbarian swordsman takes out a horde of adversaries until archers draw a bead on his half-naked hide. In the nick, a well-endowed princess steps up to order a halt. "He is a great fighting man! Barbarian, if you surrender your weapons, I will spare your life!"

"And become a slave?" snarls Clawfang. "No! I will die fighting!" Nevertheless, the argument between girl and savage goes on until the whole party is ambushed (again!) by a pack of night-skulking, cave-dwelling Norns. Clawfang is left unscathed, but charges after the creatures when he learns that the princess has been captured. Ah, for the good old days!

Many leagues underground, Clawfang locates Princess Felina, has a pitched battle against the Norns, and stumbles against a metal wall which admits him and his lady into a futuristic laboratory. Within, a bedraggled scientist revives from suspended animation and disarms the barbarian with a zap from a raygun. "So the world has reverted to barbarism! It's just as I predicted! And now that I'm the only scientist alive, I will realize my dream ...I'll be king! King of the world!"

But in another TV-western cliche, Felina draws the villain's attention and Clawfang barrels him right into a control panel. The lair self-destructs. Once outside, receiving TLC from Felina, and leaning on his sword, Clawfang muses, "I should have made sure of him. Who knows what evil I may have let loose on the world..." Not the most original of stories, but Williamson's art more than pulled it through.

Following the aforementioned Gil Kane TIGER BOY strip, no less than three more stories awaited. One was Mike Sekowsky/Joe Giella's THREE ROCKETEERS. But the other two were the products of Wally Wood himself! In the midst of his work on THUNDER AGENTS and WITZEND, Wood found time to contribute two solid strips to Harvey, and both were easily the best strips of their heroic period. The first bore the curious title, MIRACLES, INC.

MIRACLES, a charming little satire on super-heroic conventions, took up all of five pages. Thematically, it was a cross between JERRY LEWIS and DOOM PATROL. But it was drawn in a straight style and easily stands beside his best Marvel and Tower work... which is really saying something for a Harvey book!

Anyway, Scene One opened at the headquarters of Miracles, Inc. PROFESSOR WHO, a stereotyped comics scientist-egghead (spindly, aged, balding, bespectacled and dressed in a white lab coat) confers with MANLET, an Atom-sized mite perched on his shoulder. At stage right, MISFIT, a muscular ape-like creature with the underbite of a boar and Maynard G. Krebs dialogue ("Groovy! The Prof told me to cool this cat, so I'll wait right here...") walks nonchalantly through a brick wall to deliver equipment. REFLEX, the pseudo-Flash, deigns to run down to the corner store to pick up some coffee. Meantime, THERMO, the leading man figure, heats up a pot of coffee in one hand and makes ice cubes with the other for UNA, the Prof's shapely daughter and panel decoration. KLANK, a red-enameled robot, looms over the goings-on impassively.

On this uneventful day, an uninvited guest drops by their Munsters-style mansion, rings the doorbell, picks an invulnerable door lock and calmly walks through a battery of lasers and booby traps without once wrinkling his Brooks Brothers suit. Prof is apoplectic. "Go get that arrogant fool, men! Show him that it is not wise to play games with Professor Who!"

Nonchalantly, the umbrella-toting intruder crushes Misfit behind an iron door, sidesteps a rushing Reflex (who crashes through a wall behind him), sashays by as Thermo flames on and gets doused by the sprinkler system, swats Manlet's mini-ramjet out of the air with his bumbershoot, and halts Klank's as-

"Eye Spy (Agent #00 1/4) and His Gal Friday...
Jane Blond (Operative #38-22-36)" (2)
Art: ?
FILLER: text (2)

2, December 1966 Cover: Joe Simon
Title Page (1) Dick Ayers
**Spyman "The Hand Is Quicker Than the ~~Eye~~ Monster" (2: The Psycho Known as Cyclops"; 3: One Shall Win -- One Shall Die") (17)
Art: Dick Ayers
Robolink "You Push A Button..." (5)
Art: Carl Pfeufer
FILLER: text (2)

3, February 1967 Cover: Simon
Title page (1) Bill Draut
**Spyman "Death of Spyman" (2: "The Beautiful Booby Trap"; 3: "Nobody Lives Forever"; 4: "The Hour of the Id") (20)
Art: Bill Draut
Campy Champ "The Terrific Teen" (2)
Art: Carl Pfeufer
FILLER: text (2)

FIGHTING AMERICAN

1, October 1966 Cover: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
"Round Robin" (2)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from FA #?
*Peter Piper's Red Vipers" (12 2/3)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon/Geo. Roussos FA #?
***Round Robin" (5)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from FA #?
"Roman Scoundrels" (8)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from FA #?
"Duel to the Finish Line" (7)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from FA #?
"Find the King of the Crime Syndicate" (7)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from FA #2
"Expose the League of the Handsome Devils" (9)
Art/story: "Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from FA #?
"The Wild Off-Beat Villains of Fighting American" (1)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
"The Secret of Yofato's Mustache" (7)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from FA #?
FILLER: text (2) Steve Perrin

THE SPIRIT

1, October 1966 Covers: Will Eisner
"Origin" (7)
Story: Will Eisner Art: Will Eisner/Chuck Kramer
("Lorelei Rox") (7)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 9/19/48 section
("Two Lives") (7)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 12/12/48 section
"Spirit Lab" (2)
Story: Will Eisner Art: Will Eisner/Chuck Kramer
("Agent Cosmek") (7) (new splash page)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 2/13/49
Spirit Reader "The Story of Rat-Tat, the Toy Machine Gun" (7)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 9/4/49
("Ten Minutes") (7)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 9/11/49
("Thorne Strand") (7) (splash partially redone)
Art/story: Will Eisner from 1/23/49
("Gerhard Shnobble") (7) (extensive redrawing)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 9/5/48
FILLER: Interview with the Spirit (text, 2) Marilyn Mercer; preview (1)

2, March 1967 Cover: Will Eisner
"The Life Story of the King of Crime" (7)
Story: Will Eisner Art: Will Eisner/Chuck Kramer
("Plaster of Paris") (7)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 11/7/48
("The Comic Book") (7)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 2/27/49
"Spirit Lab" (2)
Story: Will Eisner Art: Will Eisner/Chuck Kramer
("Rudy the Barber") (7)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 10/22/50
Spirit Reader "The Story of Sam" (7)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 9/17/50
("Sam Chapparell") (7)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 10/10/48
("La Cucaracha") (7)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 11/19/50
("The Hallowe'en Spirit of 1948") (7)
Story/art: Will Eisner from 10/31/48
FILLER: letters (2); preview (1)

DOUBLE-DARE ADVENTURES

1, December 1966 Cover: Joe Simon, Jack Sparling
Title Page (1) Joe Simon
***Bee-Man" (7)
Art: Bill Draut
Glowing Gladiator "The Legend of the Glowing Gladiator" (2: "Plunderers From the Past"; 3: Dead Reckoning") (15)
Story: Jim Steranko Art: Bob Powell
"The Has-Been" (2)
Art: Doug Wildey from BLACK CAT MYSTIC #62
"The Ant Extract" (5)
Art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from ALARMING TALES #?
Title Page (1) Jack Sparling
**Magicmaster "The Secret of Magicmaster" (2: Fire King's Revenge"; 3: "The Might of Magicmaster"; 4: Chains of Fire") (20)
Story: Jim Steranko Art: Jack Sparling
FILLER: text (4)

2, March 1967 Cover: Joe Simon, Jack Sparling
Title Page (1) Jack Sparling
**Bee-Man "The Revolt of the Queen Bee" (2: "The Birth of the F-Bee-I"; 3: "B-Day For B-Man") (12)
Art: Dick Ayers
Glowing Gladiator "The Two Deadly Faces of Destiny" (2: "The Land of No Return") (10)
Art: Jack Sparling
"Sunken Treasure" (2)
Art: Paul Reinman from ALARMING ADVENTURES #2
"The Secret of the Mountain" (5)
Art: Al Williamson from ALARMING ADVENTURES #3
Title Page (1) Simon, Sparling
Magicmaster "Sorcery at the Circus" (2: "Battle of Magic") (17)
Art: Jack Sparling
"The Prisoner of Plastic City" (5)
Art: Hy Eisman
FILLER: text (4)

sault by asking him to compute the square root of seven (the robot gets hung on a repeating decimal). At last he confronts Professor Who. "Good day, sir," murmurs the invader. "You may call me, er...the Wizard. I have come here to join your organization, since I am the most powerful..."

Four panels later, Prof Who, in shirtsleeves, stands over a prostrate Wizard. "Well...now that that's out of the way," snaps the Prof, "I am pleased to inform you that your application for membership has passed!"

An attempt was made to continue this strip in the next issue with new artist Joe Orlando emphasizing the strip's echoes of THE INFERIOR FIVE. The engaging Misfit was dropped, to be replaced by the crime-fighting gourmet Super-Chef and Kaput, a straw-hatted country boy with the meanest hex this side of the Scarlet Witch. In the new plot twist, Miracles, Inc. went commercial and sold their powers to the highest bidder, much as Luke Cage would so some years later. Their new foes, a truly bizarre bunch with handles like Chain-O-Rama, Counter-Fit and King Cactus, made the heroes look like straights! It was warped and more than a little zany, but without Wood's art-work and in a far more cartoony style, it was hardly prime fare.

The final strip in UNEARTHLY #2 was without a doubt the best one ever done for the Harvey Thriller line. Wally Wood let loose ten pages of sublime art for the first and only chapter of the science-fiction epic EARTHMAN. This all-too-short feature ranked with the best of the back-seaters, and if any were deserving of continuation, it was EARTHMAN. (The cover blurb on the issue says "Surprise preview showing of top new super-heroes by comicdom's greatest!! Soon to be seen in magazines of their own" but this was to be more than just wishful thinking.) Unfortunately, the story's existence is known only to a small percentage of fandom, being buried in the back pages of a "Harvey Thriller"; more's the pity.

A gleaming, one-man spacecraft closes in on a "grim, forbidding world of fantastic contrasts...of dead sea bottoms, of dank, airless rain forests...of glistening, gem-like cities and vast wastelands as barren as the face of the moon." Peopled with humans and sub-humans, nomadic barbarians and super-scientific city-dwellers, the unnamed world forms a Flash Gordon-ish backdrop for the story. The spacecraft crashes and a green-and-orange-suited man crawls out of the wreckage, clutching an injured head and looking exactly like Dynamo of THUNDER AGENTS. He chants a familiar refrain, "Where am I...WHO am I? My name...my name is...can't remember..."

The amnesiac, nameless traveller runs afoul of two tribes of hostile barbarians, one group lizard-like and mounted on swift saurians, the other humanoid, armored and riders of pterodactyls. Luckily, the lesser gravity of his new homeworld gives the man superhuman strength and leaping ability (again, like Dynamo, as well as Superman). "It's the gravity," he muses, polishing off a dinosaur. "Nothing compared to Earth! EARTH?"

The spaceman subdues both tribes in turn by his mighty strength and subsequently becomes a figure of worship to the natives, who proclaim him "Grongad!" He shuffles off in search of civilization with his united followers trailing in his wake. At the end of the Earthman's journey, he comes upon one of Wood's patented beautiful futuristic cities and hopes to gain aid from its inhabitants. But, as might be expected, the two tribes do what comes naturally and make ready to sack the place. Making a mighty leap, Earthman reaches the gates ahead of them and turns back the nomads' first wave single-handedly. But a stun-ray from within the city gates lays him out, and the hero is dragged inside.

The Man of Earth awakens under a paralysis beam. He is faced by Lindra, a beautiful blonde, and Noxus, an evil clone of Ming the Merciless. "There is ancient prophecy," explains the villain. "They (the beastman tribes) believe that a legendary god-king 'Grongad,' who died thousands of years ago, will return...This 'Grongad' would unite all the tribes of beast men and conquer the whole planet!" Meanwhile, Lindra notes, "He repeats two words over and over...'Earth' and 'Man'...Perhaps it is his name...'Earthman!'" Noxus plans to use the potential Messiah as a tool for world conquest, with himself as prophet. Lindra, as might be expected, has less ambitious motives.

The united beastmen mount a second attack. Lindra frees Earthman to foil their efforts, and the hero manages to save the fair lady from death and capture the noxious Noxus in one fell swoop. After a bullet grazes his skull in the fracas, (as in all such cliches), Earthman's memory begins to return. "I'm an Earth man...this world is not my home!" Then, while the leading lady implores, "I feel he is leaving...oh, please don't go!", Earthman turns in the best Shane-fashion and walks off into the sunset. "I must retrace my steps to the rocket that brought me here...then, after I find out who I am, I shall return!"

Again, like Clawfang, EARTHMAN's plot was childishly simple, but Wood's art made it great comic-book fare, an updated Grimm's fable in four-color. The last caption read, "Earthman would like to hear from you--write to him at Harvey's...We will forward the mail to his planet." Wonder if I should have enclosed a SSAE?

So ran Harvey's crazy quilt of short-run heroes. But even if none of these books had ever seen the light of day, Harvey would still be famed for the two remaining books in its super-hero line-up. These two, of course, were the giant-sized reprint books of FIGHTING AMERICAN and THE SPIRIT.

THE SPIRIT #1 and 2 were Harvey's greatest contributions to comics in the 1960s. They introduced a new generation of readers (this author among them) to one of the truly timeless heroes in all of comicdom. A couple of SPIRIT reprint books in 12¢ size had been issued by Israel Waldman's Super Comics in 1963, but they were not nearly as well-distributed or esthetically pleasing as the 1966 editions. Only James Warren and Denis Kitchen, in the '70s, would surpass Harvey in compiling a SPIRIT magazine.

Both issues were copyrighted by Spirit owner-creator Will Eisner, who also furnished Harvey with some all-new material for the books, written and drawn by Eisner with some inking by Chuck Kramer. In SPIRIT #1 his contribution was a retelling of the origin story. The saga of Denny Colt's encounter with villainous Dr. Cobra, his presumed death and his return as the mysterious outlaw-detective the Spirit, had a few minor changes but was substantially the same as the original June, 1940 story. (The earlier origin has since been reprinted in the tenth issue of the Warren SPIRIT.) The second issue contained a never-before-revealed origin for Spirit's arch-nemesis, the Octopus, as young Zitzbath Zark (who even wore three-striped gloves when he was six) rose from a middle-class Jewish family in the Bronx to become the King of Crime. A couple of two-page spy spoofs and letters pages, neither of which were particularly impressive, were the only other new material.

But the REAL meat of the books was the reprints. Each issue gave the reader seven choice SPIRIT sections from the high-quality period of the late forties. (Most have since been re-reprinted in Warren and Kitchen collections, but not all.) For the first time in almost twenty years the Spirit encountered Freddy, a "nice kid" who became a murderer and paid for it the hard way, all in ten minutes; Thorne Strand, the archetypical Eisner villainess, all beauty and ruthless ambition, climbing to business success and wealth over her husband's corpse; Lorelei of Odyssey Road, whose siren song lured truckers to their doom; and Gerhard Shnobble, who was shot down the day he tried to show the world he could fly. Commissioner Dolan and his daughter Ellen returned to promi-

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nence; wisely, Ebony White was nowhere to be seen.

Since most fans have become well-acquainted with the Spirit from the recent reprints and Cat Yronwode's exhaustive study of the subject both here in TCR and in Kitchen's SPIRIT Magazine, little more need be said about this feature. But not all the tales in Harvey's two SPIRITs have been reprinted, even after sixteen years. Moreover, they remain the last four-color SPIRIT comics in existence, and contain some of the most classic stories. So they are well worth any SPIRIT buff's while, despite being quite expensive nowadays.

FIGHTING AMERICAN #1, though overshadowed by THE SPIRIT, was no less of an achievement. Take the classic Simon and Kirby Captain America figure, transplant him to the McCarthy era of the early fifties, and then people the strip with the zaniest bunch of loonies this side of Basil Wolverton, and you may have an idea of what FIGHTING AMERICAN was like. It was one of the craziest strips Jack or Joe had ever worked on, all baroque slapstick and parody that nearly ranks with the best Jack Cole PLASTIC MAN--a fun strip though and through! Probably even the Commies loved Fighting American.

The beginnings, however, were grim enough to satisfy any traditionalist. Prize Comics, whose editors were also Simon and Kirby, launched the book in 1953. Crusading, crippled war veteran and Red-baiter Johnny Flagg was murdered by Communist agents after exposing one too many plots. He dies in the arms of his frail, intellectual brother Nelson. But all is not lost; government scientists rebuild and strengthen Johnny's body and use it as a receptacle for Nelson's mind. Outfitted with a red-white-yellow-and-blue uniform, Nelson/Johnny gasps as he views his new corpus from WITHIN it. "Wh--why, this is incredible! Am I actually in my brother Johnny's body?" "You are!" replies a general. "And, as of now, you're also FIGHTING AMERICAN!"

Then, after picking up a kid sidekick named Speedboy, the patriotic hero took off like a house afire against Red threats hither and yon. The first few episodes published by Prize were fairly serious, but in succeeding issues S&K let their imaginations run riot and set loose a horde of freakos even Bedlam wouldn't touch: Double-header, who had two heads to plot with, one for a gangster's mind and the other housing an intellectual's; Rhode Island Red, a Two-Ton Tessie of a lady Communist who lit her cigars with a blowtorch; and the Handsome Devils, a league of grotesque, puny men who hid their imperfection behind matinee-idol masks while committing crimes. Then there were always Hotsky Trotsky, Poison Ivan, Theda Barracuda, Round Robin... but you get the general idea!

FIGHTING AMERICAN was a fascinating period document, and the zany humor makes the Red-baiting only a minor facet of the stories. The book died after eight issues just as the Comics Code arrived in 1955, but saw a revival three years after Prize's demise with the 25¢ edition Simon himself packaged for Harvey in 1966. It reprinted a handful of seriocomic thrillers and two never-before-printed tales from Prize's files. Whatever the price is on this one today, the collector is urged to grab a copy; it's funny, well-done, and decidedly like nothing else you'll EVER again read in comics!

But the fate of the "Harvey Thrillers" ultimately rested with their original-material titles. And they, alas, were fronted by losers who could not hope to keep up with the competition; Marvel, DC and the better backseaters still boasted high-quality art and stories and super-popular heroes, and Harvey got short shrift at the marketplace. Third issues of JIGSAW and PIRANA were probably in the works before their cancellation, as a house ad in SPIRIT #2 shows the covers to both of these books. But the line was scrapped with only Spyman making a third-issue foray onto the racks, and Harvey's only priority once again was the promotion of Casper and Richie Rich.

(However, 1981 brought about the issuance of SHOCKING TALES DIGEST MAGAZINE #1 from Harvey, reprinting Simon and Kirby and Bob Powell stories from the '50s mystery magazines. It is interesting to speculate about the possible contents of a similar digest devoted to Harvey's super-heroes of the '60s; Archie Comics used the same format to issue previously unpublished stories featuring the Black Hood in their ARCHIE'S SUPER-HERO COMICS DIGEST MAGAZINE #1. With the possibly-completed third issues of JIGSAW and THRILL-O-RAMA, the second issue of FIGHTING AMERICAN, and probable other completed material to choose from, a Harvey super-hero digest would be interesting both from a historical and a curiosity standpoint. The inclusion of the various Wally Wood projects would probably ensure success in comics shops at least; shall we start a letter-writing campaign?)

The demise of the line was probably just as well, though. Some Harvey heroes had quality, but it was not to be found in those chosen to headline the books. They came and went, and the industry was little-enriched and affected not at all by their passing.

Still, there ARE nights that I wonder if Earthman ever came back for the girl...

NEXT: THE MIGHTY HEROES, or SEND YOUR SUPER-HERO TO CAMP! (With many thanks to the Backseat Irregulars, and a special bouquet to Cat Yronwode for much-needed Spirit data and Mike Tiefenbacher for reprint information.)

EARTHMAN

Mighty Comics Index

The Archie Adventure Series was published by Louis H. Silberkleit, John L. Goldwater and Maurice Coyne, with Goldwater as editor and his son Richard as Managing Editor. Prior to the publication of THE DOUBLE LIFE OF PVT. STRONG #1, the only serious-themed comics published since the mid-'40s were the SAM HILL, PRIVATE EYE series in 1950-51; after the discontinuance of MIGHTY COMICS in 1967 no further adventure titles appeared until CHILLING ADVENTURES IN SORCERY/RED CIRCLE SORCERY, MAD HOUSE and SUPER COPS in '73-'74.

THE DOUBLE LIFE OF PRIVATE STRONG

1, June 1959 Cover: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
"Meet Lancelot Strong, the Man With the Double Life" (1)
Art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
"The Double Life of Pvt. Strong" (4)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
"Spawn of the 'X' World" (6)
Story/art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
Fly "The Hideout" (2)
Story/art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
"Mystery of the Vanishing Wreckage" (6)
Story/art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
"The Menace of the Micro-Men" (8)
Story/art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
FILLER: Tommy Troy Teaches Judo" (1) Jack Kirby

2, August 1959 Cover: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
***"The Strange Case of Lovable Lou, The Toy Master" (6)
Art: ?
"Upsy Daisy" (6)
Art: George Tuska
"I Wish I Were the Shield" (6)
Art: George Tuska/Joe Simon
Fly "The Boy Sentinels' Assignment: Find Tommy Troy" (2)
Story/art: Joe Simon
"The Ultra-Sonic Spies" (6)
Story/art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
FILLER: Tommy Troy Teaches Judo (1) Joe Simon?; text (1)

THE FLY

1, August 1959 Cover: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
"The Strange New World of the Fly" (8)
Story/art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
"The Fly Strikes" (2)
Story/art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
"The Fly Discovers His Buzz Gun" (5)
Story/art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
***"Come Into My Parlor" (7)
Story/art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
"The Search" (with the Shield) (2)
Story/art: Joe Simon
"Magic Eyes" (4)
Story: Joe Simon Art: George Tuska
FILLER: text (1); The Gentle Art of Jiu Jitsu (1) Sol Brodsky

2, September 1959 Cover: Joe Simon
***"Tim O'Casey's Wrecking Crew" (6)
Story: Joe Simon Art: Dick Ayers/Paul Reinman
"One of Our Skyscrapers is Missing" (4)
Story: Joe Simon Art: Al Williamson
Shield "Sneak Attack" (2)
Story/art: Joe Simon
"Marco's Eyes" (8)
Story/art: Joe Simon/Jack Kirby/?
"The Master of Junk-Ri-La" (6)
Story/art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon
FILLER: text (1); Bobby Bell's Judo Page (1) Sol Brodsky

3, November 1959 Cover: Joe Simon
"The Overblown Marshal of Spire City" (6)
Art: Jack Davis/Joe Simon
"How an Orphan Boy Became the Fearsome Fly" (2)
Story/art: Joe Simon
"The House of Solid Nothing" (5)
Story/art: Joe Simon/Sol Brodsky
"The 20 Ton Man" (7)
Story/art: Joe Simon/Bob Powell
"The Justice of Chen Fang" (6)
Story: Paul Reinman
FILLER: text (1); Tammy Troy Teaches Judo (1) Sol Brodsky

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4, January 1960 Cover: Joe Simon
"Duped By the Dazzler" (8)
Art: Ted Galindo/Chic Stone
***"Muggsy's Masterpieces" (9)
Art: Simon Studio (one panel by Neal Adams)
Shield "The Power Pak" (2)
Art: Sol Brodsky
"Slide Rule's Challenge" (8)
Art: Sol Brodsky/Bob Powell
FILLER: Bobby Bell's Judo Page (1) Sol Brodsky

5, March 1960 Cover: Bob White
***"Return of the Spider" (8)
Art: Bob White
"The Fly Meets the Bat" (12)
Art: Bob White
"The Fly Versus Tommy Troy" (6)
Art: Bob White
FILLER: text (1)

6, May 1960 Cover: John Giunta
***"The Lady and the Fly" (6)
Art: John Giunta

Troy, originally a youth beset by evil step-parents straight out of the Brothers Grimm. He was befriended by the Shazam-like Turan, a humanoid whose people had evolved from the common housefly. (No, he was not played by Vincent Price.) Turan gives Tommy a magic Fly Ring, which, when rubbed and encouraged by Tommy's saying "I wish I were the Fly!" turns him into an insect-powered super-hero in yellow and grey. Tommy, with ant-like strength, flight power, firefly heat-radiance and numerous other powers, is sent to Combat Evil In All Its Forms. Later (with issue #5) he grew up without any warning whatsoever, became a lawyer and was joined by Fly Girl (in #14), an actress named Kim Brand who was similarly employed by Turan to aid the Fly in the battle against evil. The stories were quite obviously influenced by DC's, with many of the Superman family plot devices nicked without much of an attempt to cover up: the Fly's foe the Spider looked much like Luthor, and in #21, the Fly's foes gathered together to form the "Anti-Fly League."

The same writers and artists imitated their initial mini-success with the Jaguar. He starred in ADVENTURES OF THE JAGUAR, he became a red-costumed hero by wishing he were the Jaguar, and he had all the powers peculiar to the animal kingdom. Sound familiar? Jag held on for fifteen issues between 1961 and 1963, and teamed with the Fly and Fly-Girl once or twice. The Fly, Fly-Girl and the Jaguar also held court for a little

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over a year in five or six page stories which appeared (with no fanfare whatsoever) in LAUGH #127-144 and PEP #150-160, mostly drawn by John Giunta.

Both the Fly and the Jaguar were good, grey NEW YORK TIMES super-heroes in the DC tradition of the early '60s, staid and unspectacular, and their sales never threatened anyone, with their frequency limited to only five issues per year. But their day was fast coming to a close, due to the super-charged competition Marvel was offering in 1963-64. A new breed of super-hero was on the rise, and early-sixties SUPERMAN plotting was on the way out. The Jaguar had been in limbo for about a year when the final issue called ADVENTURES OF THE FLY on the cover appeared. Archie Comics was faced with the decision of whether to drop the Winged Avenger or to renovate him almost completely.

The first inkling anyone got of the change to come was a one-page house ad in the form of a short strip which appeared in THE SHADOW #5 (more about the Dark Avenger's Archie incarnation later on). The headline blurb proclaimed: "SOCKO! Don't miss it! The new, different, amazing, dynamic super-hero...FLY-MAN!"

The name sounds more than a little absurd in retrospect, but it signalled a change in the Insect Warrior while maintaining the association with the old Fly. In seven panels, the Fly Man exhibited newfound growth and shrinking powers (just coincidentally similar to ANOTHER insect-powered hero of that time...) and beat up on a red-clad baddie called "the Infinite Brain." The last panel showed Fly Man confronted by three shadowy figures. "(Gasp)" gasps our hero. "Now that I've met you three, I've a hunch things will never be the same again!"

That they weren't. Things were a bit better, a bit worse, but never the same. The cover of FLY MAN #31, May 1965, told it all. While Fly Man dropped to his knees from a power loss, about to be attacked by the Spider and his thugs, three colorfully-garbed guys swooped out of nowhere to run interference.

"Here's one pal you can count on, Fly Man...THE COMET!!!" declared a flying man in orange and green.

"Here's another...THE SHIELD!!!" chimed in a red-white-and-blue crusader who hopped out of a manhole, surprising Fly Man, no doubt, as he'd met a very obviously different person who also called himself the Shield (in FLY #8 and 9--Private Strong) yet was struck dumb about the whole prior meeting.

"And most of all, Fly Man, here's your buddy...BLACK HOOD! YA-HOO!!!" finished the last, with the regulation triple exclamation points. Clearly, Archie Comics had made its decision: they wanted a hunk of the super-hero market.

(At this point in the game, the parent publishing group was not named Mighty; that came after THE MIGHTY CRUSADERS. Archie Comics was reluctant to use the "Archie Adventure Series" blurb anymore, probably because of the association with a humorous character. Several internal references were made to "Radio Comics" in #32, but that was almost as bad. So the company was never referred to again until the line above MIGHTY CRUSADERS #2 proclaimed, "MIGHTY COMICS GROUP presents...")

The splash panel inside was an exact duplicate of the cover (or more probably it was the other way around; it saves the publisher the price of paying for both). The narrative box at the top sounded as if it were written by a wrestling promoter or a used-car salesman, and should be read aloud at peak volume and high speed:

"The Fly Versus the Moon Men" (12)
Art: John Giunta
"The Turntable of Death" (8)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: text (1); Bobby Bell's Judo Page (1) ?

ADVENTURES OF THE FLY

7, July 1960 Cover: John Giunta
"The Haunted Yacht" (8)
Art: John Giunta
"The Fly and the Black Hood Join Forces" (12)
Art: John Giunta
"Tammy Troy, Gangster" (5)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: text (1); Bobby Bell's Judo Page (2) ?

8, September 1960 Cover: John Giunta
"The Monster Gang" (with the Shield) (8)
Art: John Giunta
**"The Fly Versus Taxus the Tyrant" (12)
Art: John Giunta
"The Puppet Fly" (6)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: text (1); Bobby Bell's Judo Page (1) ?

9, November 1960 Cover: John Giunta
"A Date With Death" (6)
Art: John Giunta
"Wizard of Nightmares" (12) (with the Shield)
Art: John Giunta
**"The Fly Meets The Cat Girl" (8)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: Bobby Bell's Judo Page (1) ?; text (1)

10, January 1961 Cover: John Giunta
"The Spider Strikes" (8)
Art: John Giunta
"The World of the Giant Gorillas" (12) (w/Black Hood)
Art: John Giunta

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"The Statue of Gold" (6)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: Bobby Bell's Judo Page (1) ?; text (1)

11, March 1961 Cover: John Rosenberger
"Sir Fly" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
**"The Invasion of the Rock-Men" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger.
"The Drinker of Doom" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); The Gentle Art of Jiu Jitsu (1)
Sol Brodsky from THE FLY #1

12, May 1961 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Cyclops From Space" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
**"Battle of the Brute Invaders" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"Menace of the Blob" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: Judo page (1) Sol Brodsky; text (1)

13, July 1961 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Tiger Genie" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
**"The Lady and the Monster" (12) (first Kim Brand)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Villain From the Future" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Jaguar ad (1) John Rosenberger

14, September 1961 Cover: John Rosenberger
**"The Menace of the Metal Monster" (2: "The Secret of the Fly Girl") (20) (first Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Scourge of the Mesas" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Jaguar ad (1) John Rosenberger

15, October 1961 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Invincible Spider Machine" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
***"The Master of Disaster" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Prey of the Shark Men" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Meet the Jaguar (1) John Rosenberger

16, November 1961 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Menace of the Killer Plants" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
***"The War of the Worlds" (12) (with Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Giant Shawabtis" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Jaguar ad (1) John Rosenberger

17, January 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Menace of the Mythological Monsters" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Test Tube Flies" (12) (with Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
***"The Creature Who Invaded Capitol City" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Jaguar ad (1) John Rosenberger

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18, March 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Fly's Visit to the Fly World" (8) (w/Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
***"House of Horrors" (12) (with Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Monster Fly" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Jaguar ad (1) John Rosenberger

19, May 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Giant Buzz Gun" (8) (with Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
***"The Night of the Five Menaces" (12) (w/Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
Fly Girl "Invasion of the Medieval Monsters" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Jaguar ad (1) John Rosenberger

20, July 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
"Prince of Flies" (8) (with Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
***"Missing Fly Ring" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"Fly Girl For a Day" (6) Fly Girl
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1); preview (1)

21, September 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
***"World of the Giant Germs" (8) (with Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
"Anti-Fly League" (12) (with Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
Fly Girl "The 30 Costumes of Fly Girl" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters; Jaguar ad (1) John Rosenberger

22, October 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Cleopatra of the Future" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
***"The Practical Joker from Planet X" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger (w/Fly Girl)
"The Comet Master" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1); Jaguar ad (1) John Rosenberger

23, November 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Ice Giant From Pluto" (8) (w/Jaguar, Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
***Lxo III's Super-Weapon" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Man With Chlordane Hands" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1); Jaguar ad (1) John Rosenberger

24, February 1963 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Mystery of the Giant Fly" (8) (w/Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
**"The Shock of the Fly World" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
Fly Girl "The Insect Gang" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1); Tommy Troy Teaches Judo (1) Sol Brodsky from DOUBLE LIFE OF PVT. STRONG #1

25, April 1963 Cover: John Rosenberger
**"The Countess of Crime" (2: "The Case of the Evil Fly Girl") (20) (With Fly Girl)
"Bone-Crackers, Incorporated" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1)

26, July 1963 Cover: John Rosenberger
**"Return of the Spider" (2: "The Spider's Revenge") (20)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Traitor Fly" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1); the Black Hood Teaches Karate (1) John Rosenberger

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27, September 1963 Cover: John Rosenberger
**"The Great Z-17 Mystery" (2: "The Menace of the Invisible Planet" (20) (with Fly Girl)
Art: John Rosenberger
Fly Girl "Fly Girl's Pet" (5) (with the Fly)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: letters (1) the Black Hood Teaches Karate (1) John Rosenberger

28, October 1963 Cover: John Rosenberger
**"The Fly Versus the Red Shark" (2: "The Red Shark's Fantastic Fortress") (20)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Mystery of the Fly Museum" (5)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: letters (1); the Black Hood Teaches Karate (1) John Rosenberger

29, January 1964 Cover: John Giunta
"The Fly's Worst Enemy" (8) (with Fly Girl)
Art: John Giunta
**"The Slave of King Spider" (12) (with Fly Girl)
Art: John Giunta
"The Triple Threat Monster" (5) (with Black Hood)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: letters (1)l the Black Hood Teaches Judo (1) John Giunta

30, October 1964 Cover: Hy Eisman
**"One Minute to Doom" (6) (with Fly Girl)
Art: John Giunta
"The World's Wackiest Crook" (12)
Art: John Giunta
Fly Girl "Fly Girl Meets the Comet" (5) (with the Fly, the Comet)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: letters (1); Introducing Young Dr. Masters (2) John Rosenberger

ADVENTURES OF THE JAGUAR
1, September 1961 Cover: John Rosenberger
**"Menace of the Inca Serpent" (8) (origin)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Invaders From Kordu" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Monster Mouse" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Fly ad (1) John Rosenberger

2, October 1961 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Gulliver of the Jungle" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
**"The Battle of the Bacteria Brutes" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger

"Okay readers! You yelled for 'em to zoom back into action again! Well...here they are... THE FLY MAN's crusading super-hero pals THE COMET, THE SHIELD and BLACK HOOD fighting, laughing, ganging up on incarnate fiends and scheming arch-villains galore! You'll be dazzled by the no-holds-barred slug-fests as these terrific warriors for justice help the WINGED WARRIOR combat the mighty minions of that king of diabolical scoundrels ...THE SPIDER! Come on in, gang, get a ringside seat at the most exciting event in comics history in the last decade! You'll cheer for 'em, you'll admire 'em, tell all your friends about 'em, and rave, RAVE RAVE about...THE FLY MAN'S PARTNERS IN PERIL!"

Wow! They sure don't write 'em like that anymore, do they? The story that followed, in three parts and 24 pages, was easily the most exciting one that Archie had ever run, despite its obvious flaws. The Spider (who in no way resembled Peter Parker) was a Luthor-style Mad Scientist who was the Fly's longest-standing enemy; he opened the tale by busting jail in a spider-legged truck. At the same time, Thomas Troy is listening to his radio. Like all upstanding super-heroes of the time, he knew that an obliging announcer would serve notice of at least one major menace a day if he kept the set on 24 hours at a time. (That's bull, and I know it. I WORK at a radio station, and not once have we EVER given a bulletin when a super-villain was in the area.) Hearing of the Spider's jail-break, Troy becomes the Fly Man; there is not a single word of explanation as to the name change. The inspiration isn't hard to understand, however with Spider-Man, Ant-Man and various other wonder-men growing to hit status over at Marvel.

The Fly Man's new origin story was revealed in MIGHTY CRUSADERS #3 almost a year later. As it turned out, he was summoned to the side of a dying Turan, who bequeathed to him a new Fly Ring that gave him mastery over his size. Fly Man's mentor apparently croaked at the end of that five-pager, but he popped up hale and hearty a few weeks later in FLY MAN #36. "It was not destined for me to die! I recovered!" he said, never one for lengthy explantions.

Things start out badly for the Winged Wonder in FLY MAN #31, and they don't get any better in the rest of the story. The cover shot of FLY MAN dropping to his knees was a perfect metaphor. After failing to locate his quarry in a mirror maze, Fly Man does battle with a giant, flying mechanical claw about to scoop up the 1965 World's Fair. Honestly. For the first time, Fly Man uses his size-expanding powers and dwarfs the Unisphere, then grabs hold of the claw. It proves to be charged with a killing amperage of electricity. This allows the Comet the privilege of swooping down from nowhere and disintegrating the Spider's device.

"Thanks a million!" rumbles the giant. "Say, I recognize you now! You're..."

"...The Comet, mighty crusader from the planet Altrox!" finishes the flying man. "I used to aid Earthlings years ago! Now that I've resigned as ruler of Altrox, Earth will be seeing more of me! I'm glad I was able to help you!" So were we, because the rest of the story made it clear that Fly Man would have problems blowing his nose if left to himself.

There was just one hitch to this forties revival: the original Comet, who had appeared with different powers and a different costume...was DEAD.

Actually, the new Comet was an attempt to blend a character introduced in FLY #30, also dubbed the Comet, with his '40s namesake. The more recent version was an Altroxian monarch who, except for his costume colors, looked the same as the character who debuted in FLY MAN #31; he had tried and failed to win the hand of Fly Girl.

The Golden Age Comet was scientist John Dickering, who had given himself the power of flight and dissolving vision. He took to fighting crime, decked out in a black-and-red uniform equipped with Cyclops-style visor; the old uniform was shown in the Comet's new origin story in MIGHTY CRUSADERS #2. After the original Comet was shot to death by thugs, his brother vowed to avenge his death and became the grim-visaged Hangman.

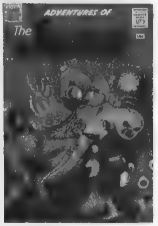
And if you don't think that gives us trouble enough, in FLY MAN #33 they reintroduced the Hangman...

Anyway, in Mighty's new origin story, the Golden Age Comet had never been killed, and presumably the Hangman was not his brother. This makes sense, as neither one seemed to know the other from Adam in FM #33. As it was, the MIGHTY Comet was transported during the forties to the planet Altrox, where the beautiful ruler Naija put him to work wiping out a horde of attacking living robots. The Comet took to the genocide with relish and even got the girl afterwards. Well, it wasn't all hearts and flowers; the last living tin can killed Naija, and the Comet returned the favor just before Altrox's atmosphere destroyed his disolvo-vision. Subsequently, he took on a new costume, acquired a flight-helmet and gauntlets with ray-projectors in the fingertips, and grew a mustache. (Unlike the Jaguar, who had a mustache only in his civilian identity and changed his entire visage to become a super-hero, the Comet's was evident in his hero guise.) At that point, redirecting himself to fighting crime on Earth, the new Comet "astro-ported" back home. All this took place in five pages.

Probably the best thing to do in this case would be to invoke Mark Gruenwald's Omniversal Theory and posit that Mighty-Earth is a divergence of MLJ-Earth, caused by the survival of the Comet. A new occurrence, never revealed, created a different but similar Hangman. (Clear? I didn't think so.)

And now, back to FLY MAN #31. Our Hero is faced by a trio of the Spider's acrobatic goons, yclept Boppo, Flipsy and Basher. As per

"The Sinister Space Whale" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Fly ad (1) John Rosenberger



3, November 1961 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Fourth Dimensional Force" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
**"The Sea Circe From Space" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Nightmare from 2261 A.D." (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Fly ad (1) John Rosenberger

4, January 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Monster of the Mystery World" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
***"The Return of the Cat Girl" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Secret of Jaguar Junction" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1) Fly ad (1) John Rosenberger

5, March 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Death-Ray from Space" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
"Champion of the Doomed" (12)
Art: Rosenberger
**"The Jaguar's Future Wife" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Fly ad (1) John Rosenberger

6, May 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
***"The Cat Girl's Rival" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Scourge of the Jaguar" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Fire From Space" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Fly ad (1) John Rosenberger

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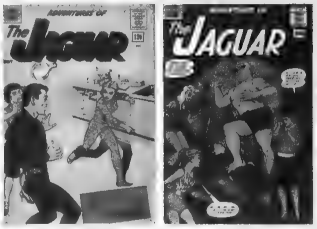


7, July 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Day the Jaguar Stopped Fighting" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
**"The Jaguar Is Missing" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"Great Outer Space Hunt" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1); ad for Fly (1/2) John Rosenberger

8, September 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
***"The Jaguar's Sixth Sense" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
"...A Day in the Life of Ralph Hardy" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"A Date With the Jaguar" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1), ad for Fly (1) John Rosenberger

9, October 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
"Time Out For Terror" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
***"The Jaguar's Last Stand" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Lady Godiva of Elephants" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1); ad for Fly (1) John Rosenberger

10, November 1962 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Menace of the Space Pirates" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
***"The Prehistoric Menace" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Curse of the White Tiger" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1); ad for Fly (1) John Rosenberger

11, February 1963 Cover: John Rosenberger
"The Man-Hating Jaguar" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger

the Spider's calculations, the time limit on Fly Man's powers (one hour--apparently a factory defect in the ring) runs out JUST as he enters their lair, and they beat the stuffing out of him. Things are rough all over. The threesome toss their victim on an elevated railroad track in the path of an oncoming train. And wouldn't you guess it...the Shield just happened to be in the neighborhood.

In a 1940s movie-serial rescue, the star-spangled swash-buckler whips the Fly Man out of the train's path and mops up all three hoods with one punch: "Flip! Bob! Bash!" Two panels later, the Shield explains, "I'm back in action again! And I'm glad of it! I was hot on the trail of those crooks who robbed the Van Pyle mansion! Fortunately, I arrived in time to help you out!" Yeah. Fortunately. At that, the Shield disappears. (By the next issue, he reveals that he now possesses teleportation powers, which he promptly uses up. How he got them we never learned. Ah well.)

Of all the Mighty characters, the Shield had the strongest potential and was the best-handled. With a flashy costume and Captain America derring-do, Mighty's premier patriot earned a four-issue run in the back of FLY MAN and five solos in MIGHTY COMICS, as well as membership in the Mighty Crusaders. Actually, the Shield of the sixties was Bill Higgins, son of the original 1940s Shield; his pop had been turned into an iron statue by a fiend called the Eraser, whom Shield Jr. promptly wiped out in his first solo adventure. And the final bit clinched his unique appeal: Bill Higgins was unemployed!

In a comics universe brimming with successful alter-egos, doctors and lawyers and Atlantean kings and millionaire munitions manufacturers, the Shield was one of a kind. He couldn't hold down a job if his stars and stripes depened on it. Episode after episode would begin with poor Bill trying to make ends meet as a railroad worker, a barber, a handyman's assistant, and the like. And just as promptly, somebody's radio would be turned on and alert the hapless hero of a new supermenace on the loose. Bill would deliberately foul up, lose his job, change into his Shield gear, and trounce the bad guys with muscles of iron and a hungry belly. Well, it was cliched, but it was funny and highly original. The Shield might have been out of his time; if he had been introduced in today's recessionary times, Mighty could have had a sure-fire folk hero on their hands. (1959-60's Shield was never referred to at all, and there's no reason that it might have been expected that he would be considering what had been done with the Comet's continuity.)

Back to FLY MAN #31. Responding to a summons from frightened insects, the Winged Wonder puts out a forest fire and is suckered into another trap. This time it's a bomb whose radiations weaken Fly Man so as to prevent escape, while a nuclear explosion is set to finish him off in seconds. Of course, by the STRANGEST of coincidences...

The Black Hood dives down astride his flying robot horse, Nightmare, and melts the bomb into slag with a blast from his ray-gun. "Good old Black Hood!" murmurs Fly Man gratefully. "How'd you know I was in peril?"

"I've a nose for trouble, especially when a friend of mine is being menaced by the kind of villains I've spent most of my life fighting!" replies the Hood. Ah, those complex explanations.

Actually, the Black Hood wasn't all that new to 1965 readers. He'd been teaching judo and karate in one-pagers in FLY and JAGUAR for some time, and even teamed up briefly with Fly and Fly Girl in issue #29. In the forties, copper Kip Burland had become the Hood in order to combat the malevolent Skull; he even rated a short-lived radio program. FLY MAN #35 clued us in that the Man of Mystery had been tricked by one Doctor Macabre into drinking a potion that made him invisible and immaterial for about twenty years, this keeping him from aging but turning him into a living, frustrated ghost. Instead of surrendering to despair, the untouchable hero took to studying science books conveniently left open by scholars (Don't believe me? Take a look at page 4, panel 4 of the story!), discovered that exposure to a certain radioactive alloy could return him to normalcy, exposed himself (to the alloy, that is) and reentered the land of the living. Okay.

The Black Hood proved to be the most popular Crusader after the Shield, and headlined four issues of MIGHTY COMICS. After Nightmare (thankfully) bit the dust in MIGHTY CRUSADERS #1, he took to riding the Hood Cycle. The Hood's solos were relatively undistinguished except for his last, in MIGHTY #50, in which Kip Burland became accused of the murder of a fellow policeman. The Hood was forced to become the Hood ALL the time, on a FUGITIVE-like quest for the real murderer, a killer with bulgy eyes and the ability to alter his facial features. The masked man wound up jailing his quarry and never knew it. It was one of Mighty's better plots, fittingly done in the last issue of the Archie group's final super-hero title.

But we're getting ahead of things. Back in FLY MAN #31, the four heroes are assembled at an amusement park by a strange sky-written message suggesting that they form a club called "The Mighty Crusaders." Fly Man, bucking majority opinion, declines: "In the first place, that name 'The Mighty Crusaders' is corny, like something dreamed up in a comic book! But more important, I'm not convinced you 'super-heroes' are mighty enough to deserve joining up with me!"

"You've associated with insects so long, Fly Man, it's driven you bugs!" snaps the Shield. "I oughtta..."

"Don't hit that blow-hard, Shield," advises Black Hood. "Let me have that pleasure!" Together, the threesome beat the stuffing out of Fly Man, who claims that his hour's worth of power has just passed. Shield, Comet and Black Hood split the scene. At that point, the Spider doffs a clown disguise, having isolated his arch-enemy from his baddies, and proceeds to --yep, you guessed it--beat the stuffing out of him.

Well, not quite. After a few minutes of pretense, the still-powerful Fly Man drops his ruse and encases the Spider in a steely cocoon. The Comet, the Shield and the Black Hood reappear, having only PRETENDED to beat the stuffing out of Fly Man in order to lure the villain out of hiding. How ingenious.

The story ends, as you might have guessed, with the foursome considering whether or not to form the aforementioned "Mighty Crusaders." Several months later they did, allowing them to move out of FLY MAN and let the title character do a solo bit again. But for two more issues, Shield, Black Hood and Comet, together with Fly Girl for the token female membership, all took up residence in their host's book. In #32, they fought an Atlantean monarch called Eterno the Tyrant. In #33 they battled a newly-revived Wizard and Hangman, who had both decided to go bad; there seemed to be more bread in it.

By this time Mighty scripting had established several trademarks. First, all characters would be MLJ revivals; not a single original super-hero was ever created during the entire Mighty run. Secondly, dialogue and plotting would be as camp as possible. Thirdly, the more heroes the merrier. There was some obvious attempting to copy Marvel elements, such as flashy villains and flip talk. But instead of creating a dramatic atmosphere reminiscent of the Fantastic Four or Spider-Man, Siegel's scripts, as an RB*CC reviewer of that time put it, read like a "Stan Lee nightmare." It was a breath of fresh air after the bloodless ADVENTURES OF THE FLY. But how much could a reader take of villains like "Phantasmon the Terrible and his Alieog-Laboids" (!) and dialogue like "Wouldn't you look strange if a butterfly was comunicating with YOU?"

Even more strange is the fact that

**"The Jinx of Juno" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Monkey in the Moon" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1); ad for fly (1) John Rosenberger

12, May 1963 Cover: John Rosenberger
***"The Girl Who Knew Too Much" (2: "The Jaguar vs. the Mind Monster") (20)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Giant Jaguar Greeting Cards" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1); The Black Hood Teaches Karate (1) John Rosenberger

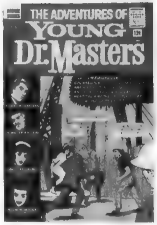
13, August 1963 Cover: John Rosenberger
***"The Birth of the Cat Gang" (2: "Jaguar Versus the Cat Gang") (20)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Menace of the Winged Bull" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: letters (1); The Black Hood Teaches Karate (1) John Rosenberger

14, October 1963 Cover: John Rosenberger
***'Kick' of the Month Club" (2: "The Jaguar's Sinister Safari") (20)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Teen-Age Jaguar" (5)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: letters (1); The Black Hood Teaches Karate (1) John Rosenberger

15, November 1963 Cover: John Giunta
"Mutiny on the Doomsday" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Prisoner of the Prehistoric Gangsters" (12)
Art: John Rosenberger

***"The Jaguar Versus the Human Octopus" (5)
Art: John Giunta
FILLER: letters (1); text (1)

THE ADVENTURES OF YOUNG DR. MASTERS
1, August 1964 Cover: John Rosenberger
***Dr. Masters' Desperate Decision" (30)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); Great Moments in Medicine (1) John Rosenberger



2, November 1964 Cover: Bill Vigoda?
***Operation Plane Crash" (14)
Art: John Rosenberger
"A Case of Bad Blood" (10)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1)

THE SHADOW
1, August 1964 Cover: Paul Reinman
***The Shadow vs. the RXG Spymaster" (2: "The

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Shadow's Doom") (20)
Art: John Rosenberger
"The Eyes of the Tiger" (5)
Art: John Rosenberger
FILLER: text (1); ad for Young Dr. Masters (1)
John Rosenberger

2, September 1964 Cover: Paul Reinman
**"Shiwan Khan's Murderous Master-Plan" (2: The Triangle of Terror") (20)
Art: John Rosenberger
"Margo Lane's Honeymoon" (5)
Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: text (1); Dr. Masters ad (1) John Rosenberger

3, November 1964 Cover: Paul Reinman
**"Shiwan Khan's House of Horrors" (20)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
"The Princess of Death" (5)
Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: text (1); ad for Fly (1) Paul Reinman

4, January 1965 Cover: Paul Reinman
***"The Diabolical Dr. Damon" (2: "Part II") (20)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
"The Human Bomb" (5)
Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: text (1), ad for Fly (1) Paul Reinman

5, March 1965 Cover: Reinman
***"The Menace of Radiation Rogue" (2:"The Sinister Triumph of Shiwan Khan"; 3: "Doom Stalks the Shadow") (25)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: text (1); ad for Fly (1) Paul Reinman

6, May 1965 Cover: Paul Reinman
***"The Incredible Alliance of Shiwan Khan and Attila the Hunter" (2: "The Captive of Terror Island"; 3: "The Shadow Vs. The Shadow") (25)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: text (1), ad for Fly (1) Reinman

7, July 1965 Cover: Reinman
***"The Shadow Battles...the Brute" (2: "The Shadow's Amazing New Weapons"; 3: "The Showdown on Gargoyle Island") (25)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: text (1); Mighty Crusaders ad (1) Reinman

8, September 1965 Cover: Paul Reinman
***"The Game of Death" (25)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: text (1)

FLY MAN

31, May 1965 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Fly, Shield, Black Hood & Comet "The Fly-Man's Partners in Peril" (2: "Battle of the Super-Heroes"; 3: "The Wicked Web of the Wiley Spider") (25)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: text (1); ad for Shadow (1) Paul Reinman

32, July 1965 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Mighty Crusaders (Fly, Fly Girl, Shield, Black Hood & Comet) "Eterno The Tyrant" (25)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: text (1); The Weapons of the Shadow (1) Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

33, September 1965 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Mighty Crusaders "Fly-Man's Treacherous Team-Mates" (25) Story: Jerry Siegel
Art: Paul Reinman (inks, p. 9-20, Joe Giella)
FILLER: preview of next issue (1) Siegel/Reinman

34, November 1965 Cover: Reinman
**Fly Man & Black Hood "The Creature from the Abyss" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Joe Giella

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Shield & Comet "Evilo, The Tempter" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Mike Sekowsky/Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (1); preview (1) Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

35, January 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Fly Man & Fly Girl "Phantasmon the Terrible" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Shield "The Thousand Foes of the Shield" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Black Hood "The Origin of the Black Hood" (5)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (1); Mighty Crusaders ad (1)
Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

36, March 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Fly Man "Fly Man's Strangest Dilemma" (10)
Story: Siegal Art: Reinman
Shield "Suffer, Shield, Suffer" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Web "The Origin of the Web" (5)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (1); Mighty Crusaders ad (1)
Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

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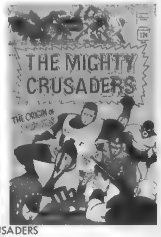
37, May 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Fly Man "Pawn of the Ultra-Foes" (14)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
**Shield "The Gladiator From Tomorrow" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2)

38, July 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Fly Man "Get Lost, Fly Man" (13)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
**Web "The Mad Caper of the Madman" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2); Mighty Crusader ad (1)
Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

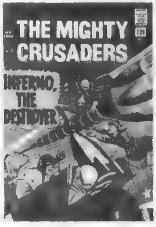
39, September 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Fly Man & Fly Girl "Beware... The Blockbuster" (14)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
**Steel Sterling "The Monster-Master" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Frank Giacoia
from the HIGH CAMP SUPERHEROES pb
FILLER: letters (1); Mighty Crusaders ad (1)
Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

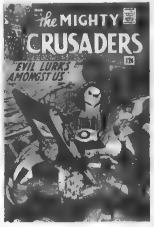


MIGHTY CRUSADERS

1, November 1965 Cover: Paul Reinman
Mighty Crusaders "Vs. The Brain Emperor" (19)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Joe Giella
**Shield "The Origin of the Shield" (5)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (1); The Fly-Man's Ultra-Pals" (1)
Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

2, January 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Mighty Crusaders "Battle Inferno, The Destroyer" (19)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Mike Sekowsky/Paul Reinman (pp. 1-8); Paul Reinman/Joe Giella (pp. 9-19)
Comet "The Origin of the Comet" (5)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2)





3, March 1966 Cover: Reinman
**Mighty Crusaders "Evil Lurks Among Us" (20)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Fly Man "The Origin of Fly Man" (5)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (1), preview (1) Siegal/Reinman

4, April 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Mighty Crusaders plus Fireball, Inferno, Web, Fox, Blackjack, Bob Phantom, Zambini, Kardak, Mr. Justice, Steel Sterling, Captain Flag, Yank, Dusty, Jaguar, Roy the Mighty Boy, Wizard and Hangman "Too Many Super Heroes" (24)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2); preview (1) Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

the Mighty bunch first appeared during the summer of 1965...and the BATMAN TV show, which popularized camp superheroics, premiered half a year later in January of 1966! Either Mighty Comics was anticipating the market for ridiculous heroism, or...(gasp!)...that was Siegel's natural writing style! That may not be such a farfetched idea, since the dialogue in some of the early '60s Superman family scripts bears marked similarities, if viewed without the camp framework, and SUPERMAN editor Mort Weisinger was well known for doing extensive rewriting on everything he edited. But I prefer to believe that Siegel was faking it on FLY MAN. After 1968, he toned down the excess for an ANGEL trilogy in KA-ZAR #2, 3 and MARVEL TALES #30; it wasn't very good, but it wasn't camp.

Whatever the case may be, despite the obvious flaws in the writing, the strong potential of the heroes and the atmosphere of BATMAN-style hijinks combined to let Mighty survive until the end of the camp fad. After that, they didn't stand a chance.

THE MIGHTY CRUSADERS ran for seven issues from November of 1965 to October, 1966. The first issue pitted the newly-named team against a motley crew of baddies from outer space with handles like Thornaldo, Electroxo, Wax-Man (who transformed Fly Girl into melting wax with the words, "Hee, hee, heel Melt away...melt away...you shall not see another day!"), Bombor, Force-Man and their leader, the Brain Emperor. The latter's main objective was the theft of an element called Gozterk (honest!) which powered a "sin-satellite" that caused all humans to hate each other ("I don't like the way you part your hair, fink!" "I hate you to pieces, kook!" "I hate YOU more than you hate ME!") The Crusaders, now under the mental dominion of the Brain Emperor, were saved when the Comet tricked the villain into boasting their mentalities beyond his own. "Ironically, trace-elements in the Sin-Satellite's radiations, acting upon my rainbow-helmet, cancelled out the Brain Emperor's command-power over me," explained the Comet. Sigh. There's always SOMETHING...

The series continued pretty much in this fashion, with the most notable story being issue #4's aptly-titled "Too Many Super-Heroes." In the space of 24 pages, every last unrevived MLJ hero came out of retirement, and every last one of them was trying to get a job with the Crusaders. The Fireball, Inferno, Firefly, the Web, Blackjack, Bob Phantom, the Fox, Zambini, Kardak, Steel Sterling, Mr. Justice, Captain Flag and his eagle Yank, Dusty, the Jaguar and Roy the Super-Boy (renamed, for obvious reasons, "The Mighty Boy") turned up to battle Hangman and the Wizard, who were finally defeated by a younger, super-heroic version of the latter villain

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(when he was a hero). Even for a Mighty Comic, the whole affair was a tumbled, jumbled, chaotic mess. Fly Man disgustedly told the applicants where to stick their prospective memberships and everybody went home. It was such a ridiculous story that I firmly believed no self-respecting comics writer would ever have the gall to try so overstuffed a storyline again. Of course, that was a pipe-dream; the debacle in DEFENDERS #62-64 proved somebody WOULD be dumb enough to try it again.

Issue #6 saw the Crusaders become agents of a group called TRIUMPH, which was the most ironic twist of all; the next issue was the last, and they weren't even featured on the cover. Steel Sterling got that dubious honor, together with the lead story spot. (At one time, editor Rick Goldwater had announced that a solo STEEL STERLING comic would join the Mighty Comics line; a new, book-length STEEL story then appeared in the Belmont book HIGH CAMP SUPER-HEROES in April of '66. The story in the final issue of MIGHTY CRUSADERS was simply a color reprint of the last two chapters of that story, the first part having appeared in the back of FLY MAN #39.) The second story in #7 featured only the Shield and the Black Hood in a particularly forgettable five-pager. The last story tied up one remaining loose end with the origin of Fly Girl, and that was that. THE MIGHTY CRUSADERS was laid to rest. There were few mourners.

Meanwhile, back at FLY MAN, things weren't going any better. The insect-powered hero, now on his own again, made a go of it for six more issues. Fly Man had about as much personality development as Krypto the Superdog during this time; a brief try at introducing supporting characters, in the form of one Judge Corelli and his pretty daughter, flopped, and villains like Phantasmon and his Alieog-Laboids just didn't help anything. The Fly Man threw in the towel after issue #39 and was never heard from again, rather a sad fate for one of the two original Archie Adventure Series characters. During this period, the back-features switched around from the Shield (#34-37) to the Web (#36 and 38) to Steel Sterling (#39). The book was eventually converted to the showcase title MIGHTY COMICS with #40 and featured solo heroes, usually the Shield, the Black Hood, the Web or Steel Sterling.

Steel and the Web were the only two important non-Crusader heroes in the Mighty line-up. The Web had potential and, sadly, Steel didn't; but it didn't matter because the Web never went anyplace anyway. John Raymond had donned the yellow-and-green costume of the Web in the Golden Age to "entrap criminals in a web of their own making." When he came out of

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retirement in 1966, Raymond had pretty well gummed himself up. Out of shape, henpecked by a wife who wanted him out of the super-hero biz and a mother-in-law who wasn't hot on him in either identity, the Web won his battles more by accident than anything else. Some of his stories, in particular MIGHTY #40, read like a CAPTAIN NICE script. After promising his wife never to fight crime as the Web again, our hero is nearly beaten to smithereens by the villainous Ironfist. "Wait!" cries the foe after delivering a flurry of unresisted punches. "You aren't mightily fighting back! How come?"

"I promised my wife I wouldn't," replies the Web. Disillusioned, Ironfist throws a tantrum, abandons his super-costume, and goes back to the farm to raise chickens! It just wasn't fun anymore.

With only one joke to play around with, even a good one can grate on the reader's nerves after a while, and that's essentially what the Web series was: a one-joke strip. (An attempt to make it a two-joke strip was made in MIGHTY #43; with typical left-field motivation, Rose Raymond became the costumed Pow Girl to fight crime at her husband's side. She never appeared as Pow Girl again, which was probably as wise a move as Mighty was capable of.) His last story in MIGHTY #50 played the Web as a semi-serious hero; but it came a little late; the book was cancelled with that issue.

Steel Sterling was important only because he was the lead feature in several Mighty books. His schtick was an anti-grav belt that let him cannonball into bad guys, coupled with an outfit of metallic fabric which resisted bullets. Truthfully, there isn't a lot more you can say about Steel. He didn't have much in the way of a personality, his storylines were about as bland as the rest of his fellow-heroes, and he never even had the blessing of a civilian identity. I have no idea how Steel was handled in the forties, but it must have been more interesting than his sixties stint.

Of course, there was another Mighty book which had started in the last days of the "Archie Adventure Series" and lasted till the dawning days of Mighty. This was Archie's version of THE SHADOW, and the main resemblance he bore to the pulp and radio legend was his name. Through all eight issues of his book the Shadow battled Shiwan Khan, a baddie taken from the pulps. The first two issues were rather competent spy thrillers probably handled by the same writer who wrote the FLY and JAGUAR stories, and John Rosenberger did the art. #3 was drawn by Reinman and Siegel arrived with #4 to stay until the end of the book. By the third issue (after being blond in the first issue), the Shadow was decked out in a gaudy green and blue super-hero costume which he wore to the end; #7 gave him a brace of gimmicky weapons that smelled of cheap imitation Bond; #8 was the last appearance of the character until DC brought him back with at least a more acceptable version. (I prefer to think that the Archie version perished by the huge .45 automatics of his pulp namesake, who had at last gotten sick of the entire affair.)

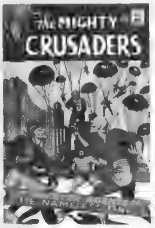
In a word, Mighty's biggest problem was superficiality. Unable to create heroes with true-to-life personalities, Siegel resorted to the camp approach to hold the readership. In the end, it just wasn't enough. Hardly any Mighty hero, with the exceptions of the Shield and the Web, was shown having a private life, a civilian identity, an occupation, non-heroic friends, or anything resembling a supporting cast. (The Web had the best set-up, yet the only characters HE could interact with were his wife and his mother-in-law.) There was no way for the reader to identify or empathize with these one-dimensional heroic figures. When he was getting his lumps, who cared? We hardly knew him anyway. And it wasn't likely we'd come back for more, even when we could find the poorly-distributed Mighty line.

Mighty also had the poor judgment to imitate their competitors and make it too obvious. As noted before, the company was not known as "Mighty Comics" until MIGHTY CRUSADERS #2, and the next issue of the book introduced their trademark...cribbed, like their name, directly from Marvel Comics. Stan Lee singled out Mighty specifically when he railed in a Bullpen Bulletin against an imitator who had so changed their name and trademark as to make the reader think it WAS a Marvel product. Truthfully, you'd have had to have been pretty naive to be so fooled (at least more than once), but it smelled of cheap-shot comics publishing, and the trademark was eventually dropped.

It was evident that Jerry Siegel was out of place as a comics scripter in the sixties. His era was the simpler, more easily-defined time of the 1940s Superman; in the Marvel Age of Comics Siegel was an anachronism. He soon left comics scripting for good after another attempt at striking paydirt at Gold Key by reviving the Owl (see Part V of this series next issue) and a short stint at Marvel. His place in the hall of fame of comics history is secure, but he will never be remembered for his Mighty work.

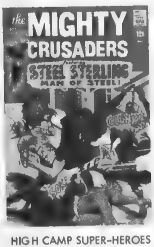
By the end of 1967, the nation had had its fill of the gaudiness of camp (in general) and Batman (in particular). The Vietnam war was still dragging on, the anti-pollution and zero-population-growth movements were gaining adherents and publicity, and the election of Richard Nixon ushered in eight more years of stolid Republicanism which culminated in everybody-knows-what. There was no longer a place for slightly daft costumed crimefighters on TV, or even such fare as THE AVENGERS, THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. or I SPY, all of which also met their end during this period. They were being crowded off the tube by the horrifying reality of Chicago policemen dragging rioters roughly into paddy wagons. The late sixties had a grimmer cast than the '66-'67 era, and the time that had made Mighty Comics possible had come to an end. Comics were dragged kicking and screaming into the more realistic and relevant bent of the '70s, with the sillier and more gentle super-heroes of

5, June 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Mighty Crusaders plus the Ultra-Men (Fox, Web & Captain Flag) and the Terrific Trio (Mr. Justice, Steel Sterling & Jaguar) "The Sinister Agents of The Nameless One" (24)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2); preview (1) Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman



6, August 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
Mighty Crusaders "The Mighty Crusaders' Blackest Day" (14)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
**Mighty Crusaders "In the Toils of the Maestro" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2); preview (1) Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

7, October 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Steel Sterling "The Monster-Master" (15)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Mike Sekowsky/Paul Reinman (pp. 1-10); Paul Reinman (pp. 11-15)
from HIGH CAMP SUPER-HEROES
Mighty Crusaders "The Savage Hammerhead" (5)
Story: Siegel Art: Reinman
Fly & Fly Girl "The Origin of Fly Girl" (5)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2)



HIGH CAMP SUPER-HEROES
A Belmont Books paperback - April 1966

Steel Sterling "The Monster Maker" (63)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Frank Giacoia (part one); Mike Sekowsky/Paul Reinman (part two); Paul Reinman (part three)
Shield "The Gladiator From Tomorrow" (24)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman from FLY MAN #37
Fly Man "Fly Man's Strangest Dilemma" (27)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman from FLY MAN #36
Shield "Suffer, Shield, Suffer" (41)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman from FLY MAN #36

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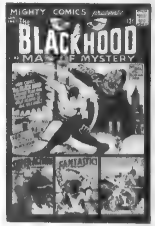
SUPERHEROES VS. SUPERVILLAINS

1, (September) 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Fly Man & Black Hood "The Creature From The Abyss" (12) from FLY MAN #34
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Joe Gisella
**Mighty Crusaders "The Fly-Man's Partners In Peril" (2: "Battle of the Super-Heroes"; 3; "The Wicked Web of the Wiley Spider") (25)
Story: Siegel Art: Reinman from FLY MAN #31
**Web "The Mad Caper of the Madman" (10)
Story: Siegel Art: Reinman from FLY MAN #38
**Shield & Comet "Evilo, The Sorcerer" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Mike Sekowsky/Paul Reinman from FLY MAN #34

MIGHTY COMICS

40, November 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Web "Vs. Ironfist" (14)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Web "Uglyman's Ugliest Plot" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Frank Giacoia
FILLER: letters (2)

41, December 1966 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Shield & Black Hood "The Shield Versus the Black Hood" (14)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Bob White
Shield "Beware the Knave" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2)



42, January 1967 Cover: Paul Reinman/Victor Gorelick
Black Hood "Versus the Ghost Cyclist" (11)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
**Black Hood "Versus The Karate Master" (11)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2); preview (1) Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman
The Black Hood Pledge (2) Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

43, February 1967 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Shield "The Wrath of the Storm King" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Black Hood "And His Secret Ordeal" (3)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Web "Vs. the Viperous Villains" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Inks: Joe Giella (pages 2-12)
FILLER: letters (2)

44, March 1967 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Black Hood "The Sinister Powers of The Mad Gadgeteer" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Joe Giella
Shield "The Menace From P.E.R.I.L." (3)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Steel Sterling "Vs. The Awesome Bravo" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Joe Giella
FILLER: letters (2)

45, April 1967 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Shield "The Doom Shadow of P.E.R.I.L." (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Joe Giella
Web "How the Web Became the Web" (3)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Hangman "The Nine Lives of Falseface" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Joe Giella
FILLER: letters (2)

46, May 1967 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Steel Sterling "Here Comes the Magnetic Menace" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Victor Gorelick
Black Hood "The Return of the Skull" (2)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Web "The Web Versus the Flipper" (11)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Victor Gorelick
FILLER: letters (2)

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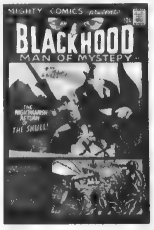

47, June 1967 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Black Hood "The Nightmare World of the Skull" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Victor Gorelick
Mr. Justice "Mr. Justice and the Cosmic Terror" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2); preview (1) Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

48, July 1967 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Shield "The Shield vs the Amoeba Man" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Victor Gorelick
Hangman "The Phantom of the Penitentiary" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2); preview (1) Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

49, August 1967 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Steel Sterling "The Deadly Masterminds" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Fox "The Gasser Attacks" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2); preview (1) Jerry Siegel/Paul Reinman

50, October 1967 Cover: Paul Reinman
**Black Hood "The Mad Monster" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
Web & Inferno "The Web Vs. Inferno, The Fire-Breather" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman
FILLER: letters (2)

PEP

150, October 1961
Jaguar "Demon Dynamos" (6) Art: John Giunta?

151, November 1961
Fly "Terror In Fly Land" (5) Art: John Giunta

152, January 1962
Jaguar "The Creature That Cried" (6) Art: Giunta?

153, March 1962
Fly Girl (title unknown) Art: Giunta?

154, May 1962
Fly "The Sleeping Beauty of Space" (6) Art: Giunta
155, June 1962
Fly Girl "The Picture of Terror" (5) Art: Giunta
156, July 1962
Fly Girl (title unknown) Art: John Giunta?
157, September 1962
Jaguar "The Monster's Eye" (6) Art: Rosenberger
158, October 1962
Fly Girl "The Face of Fear" (6) Art: John Giunta
159, November 1962
Jaguar "The Jaguar Meets The Gorilla Genius" (6) Art: John Giunta
160, January 1963
Fly "Beast From Space" (6) Art: John Rosenberger

LAUGH

127, October 1961
Jaguar "The Jaguar & The Monster" (6) Art: Giunta
128, November 1961
Fly " The Tyranny of the Cobra God" (5)
Art: John Giunta
129, December 1961
Fly "The Prey of the Giant Bird-Men" (6)
Art: John Giunta
130, January 1962
Jaguar "The Star-Beasts" (6) Art: John Giunta
131, February 1962
Jaguar "Slaves of the Brain" (6) Art: John Giunta
132, March 1962
Fly "The Eyes In the Sky" (6) Art: John Giunta
133, April 1962
Jaguar (title unknown) Art: John Giunta?
134, May 1962
Fly (title unknown) Art: John Giunta?
135, June 1962
Jaguar (title unknown) Art: John Giunta?
136, July 1962
Fly Girl "The Mystery Trio" (6) Art: John Giunta
137, August 1962
Fly & Fly Girl "The Day The Fly Stopped Flying" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger
138, September 1962
Fly "The Crooked Fly" (6) Art: John Giunta
139, October 1962
Fly "Fly Girl's Mask" (6) Art: John Giunta
140, November 1962
Jaguar "The Animal Army" (6) John Giunta
141, December 1962
Jaguar "The Immortal Alien" (6) Art: John Giunta
142, January 1963
Jaguar "Terror Of The Jungle" (6) John Giunta
143, February 1963
Fly Girl "Wildcat Joe's Weird Will" (6) John Giunta
144, March 1963
Jaguar "The Creature From Planet RCQ07" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger

ARCHIE'S SUPERHERO SPECIAL
1, 1978 Edition
Black Hood "The Nightmare World Of The Skull" (12) Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/ Victor Gorelick from MIGHTY COMICS #47
Pureheart the Powerful "The PH Factor" (8) from?
Jaguar "The Monster Mouse" (6)
Art: John Rosenberger from JAGUAR #1
Evilheart "The Plight of The Bumblebee" (13)
Fly "Marco's Eyes" (8)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon/? from FLY #2
Sabrina "The Ultimate Cure" (6)
Art: Stan Goldberg from CHILLING ADVENTURES IN SORCERY #1
Pureheart the Powerful "In The Center Ring" (13)
Shield "Meet Lancelot Strong, the Man With the Double Life" (1) Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from PVT STRONG #1
Shield "The Double Life of Private Strong" (4)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from PVT. STRONG #1
Shield "Spawn of the 'X' World" (6)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from PVT STRONG #1
Shield "Mystery of the Vanished Wreckage" (6)
Art/story: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from PVT STRONG #1
Captain Hero "The Decidedly Decent Demon" (12)
Superteen "Maid of Mischief" (13) from ?
Web "The Web Versus the Flipper" (11)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Victor Gorelick from MIGHTY COMICS #46
Pureheart the Powerful "Mad Doctor Doom's Dupe" (10) from ?
FILLERS: Sorcery "Quick Justice (1) Art: Stan Goldberg from CHILLING ADVENTURES IN SORCERY #1; "Black Fog" (2, text) illustrated by Gray Morrow; "Essays Into The Supernatural" (1) Text: Phil Seuling, Art: Gray Morrow; pin-up of Pureheart the Powerful (1)

ARCHIE'S SUPER HERO COMICS DIGEST MAGAZINE
2, 1979 Cover: Victor Gorelick ?
"Black Hood" (8)
Story: Gray Morrow Art: Gray Morrow
Shield "The Menace of the Micro-Men" (8)
Story: Joe Simon Art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon from DOUBLE LIFE OF PVT. STRONG #1
Fly "The Lady and the Monster" (12)
Story: ? Art: John Rosenberger from ADVENTURES OF THE FLY #13
"The Ultimate Power" (6)
Art: Wally Wood
Jaguar "The Death Ray From Space" (8)
Art: John Rosenberger from ADVENTURES OF THE JAGUAR #5
Hangman "The Nine Lives of Falseface" (10) from MIGHTY COMICS #45
Superteen "Superteen Strikes Again" (6)
Black Hood "The Black Hood Hits a Sour Note" (4)
Story: Marvin Channing Art: Alden McWilliams
Steel Sterling "The Awesome Bravo" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Joe Giella from MIGHTY COMICS #44
Web "Uglyman's Ugliest Plot" (10)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman/Frank Giacoia from MIGHTY COMICS #40
Pureheart the Powerful "Tarantula's Trap" (11)
Art: Bob White
"Time Twist" (3)
Story: Tom DeFalco Art: Chic Stone
Fox "The Gasser Attacks" (12)
Story: Jerry Siegel Art: Paul Reinman from MIGHTY COMICS #49
**Black Hood "Life's Not Like a Comic Book" (10)
Story: Gray Morrow/Neal Adams Art: Neal Adams/Dick Giordano
Shield "The Ultra-Sonic Spies" (6)
Art: Jack Kirby/Joe Simon Story: Kirby/Simon from THE DOUBLE LIFE OF PVT. STRONG #2
"The Beast In the Forest" (5)
Story: Tom DeFalco Art: Jesse Santos
Fly "The Fly Meets the Cat Girl" (8)
Art: John Giunta from ADVENTURES OF THE FLY #9
Black Hood "It's Murder to Beat the Odds" (5)
Story: Marvin Channing Art: Alden McWilliams
FILLER: text (1) reprint from CHILLING ADVENTURES IN SORCERY #1

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- ☐ GRIMM'S GHOST STORIES #60
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- ☐ TWEETY AND SYLVESTER #117
- ☐ TWILIGHT ZONE #92
- ☐ WOODY WOODPECKER #198
- ☐ YOSEMITE SAM #79

- ☐ HEAVY METAL #62 [V6#2]
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- ☐ THE SPIRIT #33

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- ☐ FIGHTIN' ARMY #159
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- ☐ THE SAGA OF SWAMP THING #3
- ☐ SGT. ROCK #366
- ☐ SUPERMAN #373
- ☐ THE SUPERMAN FAMILY #220
- ☐ TALES OF THE NEW TEEN TITANS #2
- ☐ UNKNOWN SOLDIER #265
- ☐ WARLORD #59
- ☐ WEIRD WAR TALES #113
- ☐ WONDER WOMAN #293
- ☐ WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #281

- ☐ *MS. MYSTIC #1

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- ☐ ROM #32
- ☐ THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #77
- ☐ STAR WARS #61
- ☐ TEAM AMERICA #2
- ☐ THOR #321
- ☐ THE UNCANNY X-MEN #159

the '50s-'60s period doomed. John Goldwater and the rest of the Archie empire weren't much disturbed in all probability; it was a simple matter to drop the super-heroes and concentrate on their forte: turning out ARCHIE for pre-teeners. They hadn't really lost much.

There was one last gasp for the Mighty heroes, or one of them, anyway --though it very nearly died stillborn. When Archie briefly tried out a line of serious books in the early '70s, including RED CIRCLE SORCERY and the one-shot SUPER COPS, they decided to give the costumed-hero market another try. Editor Gray Morrow was commissioned to try to revive the BLACK HOOD title, and he corralled such worthies as Al McWilliams, Neal Adams and himself to do the art for the first issue. Though completed, the book's release date (January, 1975) was coincident with the demise of the Red Circle line. Material for SORCERY, MAD HOUSE and the one issue of BLACK HOOD had been ready to go but Goldwater again gave up the notion of competing with Marvel and DC on their own turf, and "postponed" them all forever. He reckoned, however, without the impact of the SUPERMAN film, and 1978 saw the release of an issue of ARCHIE'S SUPER HERO SPECIAL which featured reprints of Mighty and such pre-Mighty material as most of THE DOUBLE LIFE OF PRIVATE STRONG #1 and other Simon and Kirby FLY material, as well as the requisite Archie-Jughead-Betty participation in the person of Pureheart the Powerful, Captain Hero and Superteen.

The second issue, dubbed ARCHIE'S SUPER HERO COMICS DIGEST MAGAZINE, at long last included the stories meant for the BLACK HOOD #1. It proved to be an excellent feature, especially in the Adams tale. A "new" Kip Burland, a police detective unconnected with his previous namesakes, quit the force after his investigations made him politically unpopular and inherited the black hood of his ancestors who, Phantom-like, had used it to disguise themselves in a fight against wrongdoing through the ages. The three tales were full of cop-show action and drama and showed quite a bit of promise for the feature as a continued series. But Archie was no longer interested in following it up, sales evidently not worth following it up. No further super-hero digests have appeared in two years, and no new stories have been commissioned. (Ironically, just as Archie's second digest was published, Gray Morrow's STINGAREE character appeared in the June, 1979 issue of HEAVY METAL with remarkably similar costume and origin, obviously in the belief that the earlier stories would never see print.)

In truth, there isn't much reason for collectors to start badgering their local dealers for back-issue Mighty epics except out of curiosity, and perhaps a few laughs. Marvel, DC, Charlton, Tower and even Harvey books of the time were better done, and Mighty existed only because there was then room for more than the small number of companies on the stands there is now. Today's market seems interested only in Marvel Comics at the expense of everyone else, but you never know...

IF the characters were handled seriously and treated with more than a modicum of respect, IF the writers and artists treated them as more than just a job, and IF John Goldwater could be convinced (perhaps in a direct-sales-only project aimed directly at super-hero fans), we might see the Shield, the Black Hood, the Fly and the Web the way they should have been handled.

But that isn't likely for a long time to come. Not, perhaps, until readers forget there ever was a Mighty Comics...

NEXT: AND HOW COULD WE FORGET...!
(With much thanks to George, Marv, Liz and expecially Alice, who helps me keep it all together.)

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YOU WOULDN'T ACCEPT YOUR SON'S HAND AND A HALF BARGAINING THERE ON THE ROCK...
AND THEN UP AND DIE ON YOU...
WHY I'M NOT GOING TO LIE ANYMORE.
CAN'T SAY THAT'S NOT FOR MY PETER PERFECTION THOUGH THAT I FEEL! ON-RIGHT EMOTIONS
ESPECIALLY ANGER
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! GIN...ALL 13 HERDES
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ARE YOU SUGGESTING REVENGE, THAT I SHOULD DELAY PLOTTING MY MENDING -
I'D PREFER TO USE MY REAL NAME
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SUPERMAN by Siegel & Shuster

LET THOSE SILLY WOMEN PARADE IN FUTILE PROTEST AGAINST YOUR REFUSAL TO BE SUPERMAN'S BEST MAN. I'VE BETTER WAYS TO CHANGE YOUR MIND!
(~THOSE WOMEN CAN HELP ME OUT OF THIS...~)
BE KENT!
LADIES! IT'S ME—CLARK KENT!!
CLARK KENT IS THE ENEMY OF ROMANCE!
THERE'S THE MONSTER!
THEY'LL TEAR HIM APART—AND US TOO! LET'S GET OUTA HERE, GALINT.
GET HIM!
TO ESCAPE GAUNT'S "FORCING" HIM TO BECOME BEST MAN TO INSURE SUPERMAN'S EARLY MARRIAGE, CLARK ATTRACTS THE ATTENTION OF A MOB OF WOMEN PARADING TO PROTEST HIS REFUSAL.
(~FROM THE FRYING PAN INTO THE MEAT GRINDER! BUT IT'S THE ONLY WAY~!)
SCRATCH HIS EYES OUT!
LOOKS LIKE THEY MIGHT PERSUADE HIM WHERE I COULDN'T!
LET ME AT HIM!
OUT OF MY WAY! I JUST HAD MY HANDS ON THE BRUTE!
WHERE IS HE? STOP PUSHING!
(~THAT KENT DUMMY! MY CHANCE FOR SUPERMAN TO MAKE A JOINT APPEARANCE WITH CLARK KENT AND GET OUT OF THIS MESS. BUT IT'S GOING TO TAKE SUPER-SPEED..!)
(~HERE'S HOPING THEY'RE TOO WOUND UP TO NOTICE THIS IS THEIR DUMMY~!)
CLARK KENT! RELEASE!
IT'S SUPERMAN!
HE'S GOT CLARK KENT!
GO BACK TO YOUR HOMES! I'LL HANDLE CLARK IN MY OWN WAY!
ISN'T HE AWFUL? AND WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING HIM A FAVOR—FORCING KENT TO BE BEST MAN AT HIS WEDDING TO LOIS LANE!
HMPH! ALL MEN ARE ALIKE, I GUESS. EVEN SUPERMAN!
PRESENTLY...
LOIS—THIS BEST MAN BUSINESS—I—I—
YOU BRUTE! I WOULDN'T HAVE YOU AS BEST MAN FOR ANYTHING! I JUST SAW THE NEWS FLASH ABOUT YOU AND—AND—THOSE WOMEN!!
YOU MEAN—YOU DON'T WANT ME TO BE BEST MAN ANY MORE?
SO YOU CAN REFUSE AND HAVE ALL THE WOMEN IN METROPOLIS PAYING ATTENTION TO YOU? I SHOULD SAY NOT!
SUPIE, AND I WILL BE MARRIED NEXT WEEK—AND WITHOUT YOU!
BUT LOIS—YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I CAN EXPLAIN!
AND JUST TO PROVE WE'RE NOT WASTING ANY TIME, HERE'S A SCOOP FOR YOU, SUPIE AND I ARE GOING SHOPPING TOMORROW—FOR FURNITURE!
WILL YOU STOP CALLING HIM "SUPIE"!
LATER...
WHAT A CHANCE FOR A KILLING! WE'LL BE ABLE TO CLEAN UP A FORTUNE, THANKS TO SUPERMAN AND THAT DIZZY DAME OF HIS!
SUPERMAN'S GF SUPERMAN'S GONE SHOPPING FOR FURNITURE WITH LOIS LANE!

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The Menomonee Falls Gazette

BUT DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT A RIOT OUR APPEARANCE IN THOSE DEPARTMENT STORES WILL CAUSE?
WE HAVE TO SELECT OUR FURNITURE, SUPIE, AND BESIDES, IF YOU'RE NOT CAPABLE OF COPING WITH RIOTS—
—HOW CAN WE EVER HAVE A PRIVATE LIFE?
OOH! NOW LOOK HERE! SAY WHAT YOU LIKE, BUT I'M NOT GOING!
VERY WELL, THEN! I'LL GO ALONE AND GET TRAMPLED TO DEATH! SOMEONE HAS TO SELECT OUR FURNITURE!
WHAT'S THE USE! EITHER SHE GETS HER WAY OR I'M A HEEL!
THE FURNITURE DEPARTMENT'S ON THE SIXTH FLOOR, WELL, ENTER THROUGH THE WINDOW AND AVOID ATTRACTING TOO MUCH ATTENTION.
I DON'T SEE WHAT YOU'RE AFRAID OF.
YOU SEE— SIMPLY! AND YOU WERE SO AFRAID OF CROWDS!
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I CAN BE WRONG, CAN'T I?
I JUST SEEN THEM GO IN THROUGH THAT SIXTH FLOOR WINDOW!
LET'S GO!
THEY'RE ON THE SIXTH FLOOR—IN THE FURNITURE DEPARTMENT!
MA—IF MRS. SUPERMAN HITS SUPERMAN WITH A FRYING PAN, WILL HE HOLLER JUST LIKE DADDY?
CLOSE YOUR MOUTH, STANLEY!
SALE
MEANWHILE, AT GAUNT'S HIDEOUT...
THEY'RE AT STACY'S DEPARTMENT STORE AND THE CROWD IS JUST CUTTING LOOSE. SHOULDN'T BE ANY TROUBLE GETTING AT THOSE REGISTERS IN THE CONFUSION, BUT JUST IN CASE SUPERMAN STARTS ANYTHING, REMEMBER—
—GO FOR LOIS LANE!
WITH SUPERMAN DRAWING THE CROWDS, THIS PLACE OUGHTTA BE EASY PICKINS!
BUT REMEMBER— IF THAT MUSCLE GUY BOTHERS US— GET LOIS LANE!
STACY'S GREATEST
NO CROWDS, EH? I WARNED YOU, YOU KNOW!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! WHAT ABOUT IT? I CAN BE WRONG, CAN'T I?
THERE THEY ARE, SUPERMAN AND LOIS LANE!
LOOK, MA— THEY'RE HOLLERIN' JUST LIKE YOU AND POP!
SHUT YOUR MOUTH, STANLEY— OR I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING YOU'LL REMEMBER!
HIT THAT DRAWER— QUICK!
JUST LIKE IT WAS GROWING ON TREES. ONLY NO CLIMBING.

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A Comic Reader

By Sam Kujava

I almost hesitate to bring up the matter of THE AVENGERS #218 after all this time. It hit the stands after I mailed my previous column to TCR, thus missing inclusion as a worthy recipient of my informal "Tasteless Award of the Month." I've knocked the weaker efforts of scripter J.M. DeMatteis in other columns; was it fair, or vindictive, to do so again? And with my employers skipping a month's publication, AVENGERS #218 would be a vague memory in most of your minds. All told, it was forgettable in many respects. I probably would not have called attention to it had my distinguished competition spoken of it. Often I hold my thoughts when Cat Yronwode or one of the COMIC JOURNAL reviewers trash a notable stinker. But it seems as if I'm alone on this.

Without trying to appear a prude censor or fuddy-duddy, AVENGERS #218 was an excellent example of the lack of morality displayed by some "professionals" up at Marvel. The image of a child holding a gun to his head, about to commit suicide, which "adorned" the cover, was FLAT OUT cheap, sickening and sad. Never mind that the child wasn't ACTUALLY a child...the suicide wasn't REALLY final; things are never what they appear to be in the fantasy land of comics. The simple graphic image of a kid about to blow his brains out, which was repeated and carried through on the inside pages, was a shocking display of the lack of respect Marvel has for the younger members of its audience. The writer and editor may argue for the need of a gripping dramatic attention-getter to best illustrate the tale...I thought of all that too. With teenage suicide at an all-time high, I think the final decision of De Matteis, Salicrup, Shooter or whomever, was ill-advised. Remember, this WASN'T a story dealing with the problems of adolescent depression or suicide! I believe the cover scene was just a sordid, shock-their-pants-off device to sell a lousy comic book. What has happened to the love of entertainment and consideration of audience? Though I'm not a qualified psychoanalyst, I wonder who the "creative" people involved HATE more...their audience, or themselves.

THE ZINE AROUND THE CORNER -- New TCJ editor Dwight Decker offered his opinions of the revolution taking place in the comic field, in the latest Winter issue. Since Dwight and I are friends, and share many of the same feelings toward funnybooks, it's not surprising that he spoke to many of the issues that I've written about in past A COMIC READER columns. Though Dwight is painstakingly honest in his appraisal of the business, past, present and future, he manages to let his optimism shine through the present uncertainties and growing pains. Reading TCJ used to leave me unhappy and burdened about my innocent chosen hobby. After all, Gary Groth's professed elitist measuring stick didn't leave much to smile about! However, Dwight's less antagonistic stance is welcomed and needed. As is the unstated feeling of TCR and yours truly, I feel that Dwight will propogate the message that mostly comics are just plain silly! Call attention to the experiments and formats and glorious risk-taking! But don't gnash your teeth and waste your breath on the failures. The banal has always been around.

But I can't quite let Dwight get away unsullied. While I enjoyed his interview with Frank Miller, and the subsequent critiques of Frank's tenure of DAREDEVIL, I was amazed at the omission of the name of one whose creative contributions to that title are nothing less than considerable. Only Peter Sanderson bothered to phrase the book as being Frank Miller's and KLAUS JANSON'S. I yield to none in my admiration of Frank's gargantuan leaps as a writer/storyteller. But I'm a give-credit-where-credit-is-due kind of guy. Klaus, take a bow!

PHANTOM ZONED -- Now that the four issue mini-series THE PHANTOM ZONE has come and gone, scattered praise has been heard, mostly for writer Steve Gerber's twisted look at the familiar stuff of SUPERMAN legend. We readers were treated to the merciless slaughter of some innocent, outclassed policemen early on. Later we witnessed the nihilistic posturings of some Earth punk rockers and their Kryptonian "counterparts." And MORE violent, cruel deaths, as graphically enacted as I've seen in comics. This was NOT my cup of tea, friends. I gather that the writer and editor were trying to inject a little modern strife into the staid Superman mythos. I think that they went overboard for the sake of going overboard, never a valid excuse for anything. At least, I don't feel this project was a success, unless you LIKE to see a decent character get DIRT on his cape. The villains in SUPERMAN II were occasionally vile and cold-blooded, but compared to the Gerber models in PHANTOM ZONE, the filmic Zod and Co. were nothing more than schoolyard bullies!

ACR READS MAIL -- A recent letter writer to TCR lamented the current state of the Batman character as written by Gerry Conway. Bob Holum wonders what my opinion on this "nightmare" is. Honestly, Bob, I don't know what you are specifically referring to, unless you mean the whole kit and kaboodle, in which case, we're gonna be here all week!

Dick Giordano is on the editorial record as stating that he thinks Conway is the man for the job. More realistically, Conway is qualified mainly because he is one of the only writers available that can churn out a huge volumn of reasonable consistent work, including the two BATMAN books, BATMAN and DETECTIVE COMICS, with their overlapping continuity, each and every month. He is the reliable plodding workhorse that remains behind when the Gerbers and the Engleharts get fed up and leave. Try to convince editor Dick G. of the value of dumping Gerry after you consider these facts! I know that it is of little consolation when you read the same tired cliche or repetitive turn of phrase for the umpteenth time, but there you have it!

One of the current plotlines being explored in those books is Bruce Wayne's divestment of interest in the Wayne Foundation. In a recent issue, we were treated to the deliberate actions of a man who is supposed to be a business leader, a captain of industry, a closet "hero-man" (in the Conway venacular), a...a damned MATURE ADULT! Wayne callously abuses his loyal right-hand man, Lucius Fox. Fox, not knowing of any hidden "motives," is hurt, and we the readers are supposed to feel awful. Sorry, Gerry, but the only thing awful was that particular bit of writing. As a working adult with a complex social and business schedule, I have NEVER found the need to mislead my friends. Even if I can't fill someone in on all the details, at least I have the decency to speak to them in a civil tone! It's all part of being PROFESSIONAL! Suffice it to say, I didn't "buy" the bit about Bruce Wayne's mean-spirited handling of a trusted employee (BATMAN #345, pages 6-7). Like the gun to the child's head, it may be an attention getter. It cheats the faithful reader, though. We may have to live with Conway's style of writing if we want to follow Batman's adventures, but that doesn't excuse sloppiness and poorly thought-out character development. So, Bob Holum, am I on the right track? Overall, I don't think we can expect any major shake-ups on these titles with the new BATMAN movie looming in the future. The powers that be at DC are going to see how the winds blow, crossing their fingers and hoping that they get another SUPERMAN, THE MOVIE-type blockbuster. While WE know that ONE ASPECT of the Batman character that was done well by O'Neil and Adams a DECADE ago has been done to DEATH,

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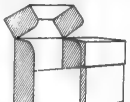

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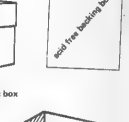

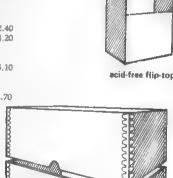

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corporate sensibilities are sluggish and difficult to be nudged. At least we get an occasional book like BATMAN #347, which Conway had no hand in, that reminds us that there is more to Batman than a night creature/scum-seeker. The single issue is highly recommended to those who remember when writers like Frank Robbins and David V. Reed lent variety to the Bat-guy. Kudos to Rog Slifer, Robin Snyder and the FLEXIBLE editor!

PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED -- Last time I complained about the sloppy art on THE FLASH. My editor received that column about the same time I received the new FLASH, wonderfully inked by Dennis Jensen! Shades of Murphy Anderson! This boy is good, and makes this title look like it did in its gravy days!

NUMBER JUMBLE -- If the sales figures in the recent DC titles are to be believed, how come GHOSTS, with better overall sales than HOUSE OF MYSTERY, was axed, while the latter continues publication?

DEJA VU -- SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING #1...a nice debut issue. Artist Tom Yeates has the good sense to draw in his own style rather than "ape" Bernl Wrightson. But Martin Pasko's script, which has the old saw of the mysterious youngster befriended by the muck-monster (What is her horrible secret?) is an obvious rehash of what-has-gone-before. It's so undisguised that it must be editorial policy to do SWAMP THING #1-10 all over again. Why not? The kiddies don't remember those old books anyway (unless they happened upon those SWAMP THING SAGA reprints of a couple years back), especially if they're new fans being drawn to the book because of the film. By the by, I've seen photos of the Swamp Thing costume in CINEFANTASTIQUE. As a former model to a monster-costume artist, I can say that the thing LOOKS like a guy in a rubber suit! The art is making you FORGET it's a costume. But maybe...just maybe, it will "work" in the coming feature film.

HOW APT -- Every week I have to shuffle through my latest comics purchases, showing each of them to my excited son and announcing the name of each title. By the time I get to this particular book, tongue slips into cheek as I say, "LEGION OF "STUPID" HEROES!" After reading the last couple of issues, with the new "talent" therein, I guess I wasn't far off the mark.

When flashing the respective covers of these new purchases to wife and son, I ask them what their favorites are. For what it's worth...five-year-old son loves all the Marvels with gaudy, crowded and confused splashes of color...28-year-old wife likes the Kubert covers which are well-planned, simple, direct and striking. And here we were told that DC appealed to the younger audience!

THE BIGGEST LAUGH OF THE MONTH is on the splash page of DAZZLER #16. This rag has long been a source of cheap thrills for perverted little boys, but the humongus mammary glands weighing Dazzler down in this badly-drawn panel are so exaggerated as to be ridiculous! This chest display beats all out the number Mike Nasser did on Wonder Woman a few years back. I don't even know if it was that intentional; Frank Springer cares so little for the work he's doing that th breasts of Dazzler and Enchantress seem to shrink and grow from panel to panel, page to page. All the juvenile garbage aside, I wonder why anybody thought this was a good idea for a comic book anyway? You can't translate musical performances into a visual medium! Fingeroth's scripts contain talky captions TELLING us how wonderful Dazzler is on stage. Don't TELL what you can show, I say, but of course, the lack-lustre art by Springer and Vince Colletta adds little. C'mon, Shooter, when the people responsible for producing the title NO LONGER CARE, how long will it take before readers react likewise?

ACTION COMICS #531 -- Boy, I like Marv Wolfman's premise for the latest SUPERMAN adventure! Just like in REAL LIFE, the Daily Planet is a money-losing enterprise about to bought by a huge conglomerate. Nice premise, huh? Too bad the rest of it was so idiotic! Oh, there were a couple of nice moments between Clark and Lois, and Jimmy Olsen and Perry White. But they were thrown into a vat of one-dimensional typical comic book situations...the no-doubt-about-it sleezy publisher, the last-minute turnaround in thinking by Morgan Edge, all executed with not the least bit of flair by Joe Staton and Frank McLaughlin. Staton is reported in the newszines to be leaving the comic book industry; with art like hiswecent output, it is evident that he departed in SPIRIT long, long ago. I don't know what has happened to Frank's inking. He has lost whatever fine edge he had to his brushwork. All in all, it was nice to see Wolfman speak to a very topical issue, the death of newspapers ...for about a minute and a half.

FUNNY? -- It's really TRYING to see Roy Thomas trying...to write FUNNY in CAPTAIN CARROT #3. I've got a sense of humor, but it is a strain to even crack a smile over much of this overwritten mayhem. Someone should tell Roy that, as a humorist, if his tongue lodges itself any further in his cheek, there'll be a far different kind of GAGGING going on! Just ask the unwary readers of this new and not-so-long-lived title.

TEAM AMERICA #1 -- I'm tired of repeating myself about overdone scripts and underdone artwork. This new title is another one, just like the other ones, just like the other ones... Instead of being disappointed by these latest flubs, try some decent comics that you may not have considered before. NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY, UNKNOWN SOLDIER, SGT. ROCK, G.I. COMBAT, WORLD'S FINEST, WEIRD WAR TALES and FLASH are enjoyable to read, contain work by pros who continue to care about what they do, and are produced to entertain the audience they're meant for. Quality and craftsmanship are preferable to shoddiness and mean-spiritedness to A COMIC READER any day of the week.

- Sam Kujava

Cel Break

BETTY BOOP IS A DOLL. A pattern for a nineteen-inch Betty Boop doll is available for $2.25 (plus 50¢ postage) from Parade Patterns, Box 144, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113. Allow three weeks for delivery. (And New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, California and Michigan residents have to include sales tax.) I saw an ad a few months back from the same company and it was offering patterns for a Popeye doll, Olive Oyl doll and Swee'pea doll. So you might ask for a catalog if you are interested.

ANOTHER ADAPTATION BOOK. Apparently a professor up at Yale is putting the final touches on an extensive book about silent animation. Here's a field that hasn't been covered too thoroughly in the past. (Also, John Culhane is apparently still hard at work on his book about world animation that was announced almost a decade ago.)

NEW DISNEY FEATURE. Jeffrey Price and Peter Seaman, writers of the new Disney film TRENCHCOAT, have been signed to write the novel adaptation of WHO CENSORED ROGER RABBIT?, a live-action/animation mystery-comedy detective story. Darrell Van Citters of the Animation Department is designing a cast of new cartoon characters for the film.

AND THE WINNER IS... Los Angeles Beautiful, Inc., presented Disneyland with a Special Bicentennial Award for contributing significantly to the enhancement of Los Angeles and having made an impact on the quality of life throughout the L.A. area, with a profound effect on the city's aesthetic environment.

OOPS. MISSED THIS ONE EARLIER. Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley proclaimed November 21, 1981 to be "Disney Animation Day" in recognition of past and fu-

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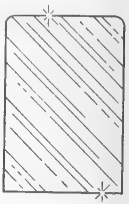

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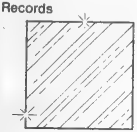

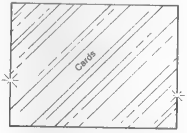

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ture accomplishments of the Disney animators. Special commendations were given to Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, authors of DISNEY ANIMATION: THE ILLUSION OF LIFE. The proclamation cites the Disney animators for their pioneering efforts in the use of sound and color and for their devotion to quality entertainment.

STILL MORE DISNEY. Walt Disney Productions is at work on a film entitled EINSTEIN. (Script is by Thomas Pope who wrote HAMMETT.) It'll include animation to show Einstein's ideas.

I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE IT. No further news from Robert (LOVE AT FIRST BITE) Kaufman's Bobka Productions which purchased the Viacom film rights to Mighty Mouse which it hoped to make into a live-action project. My personal opinion is that it will meet the same fate as the live-action version of Tom and Jerry that was announced a few years ago.

SLOWLY BUT SURELY. The Steve Bosustow Memorial Fund recently received a gift of $1000 from MCA. The Fund, established upon the animator's death, hopes to set up a scholarship for future animators.

WELL BLOW ME DOWN. UCLA Film Archives presented a lecture on the early history of animation unions entitled "Popeye the Union Man." The January 25th presentation featured Harvey R. Deneroff (son of the late Joe Deneroff who worked for Fleischer and Famous Studios) and a panel discussion with Fleischer strike leader Lou Appet and his wife Esther as well as Disney strike leader Art Babbitt.

NOT EXACTLY ANIMATION, BUT... Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets, has signed a deal with Home Box Office subscription TV service to create a special half-hour show with all new characters. The show, to be called FRAGGLE ROCK, will consist of 36 episodes populated by an assortment of Dr. Seussian-characters called Fraggles. Work will begin on the show in March but viewers won't get to see the final result until late 1982.

DICK TRACY GOES DISNEY. The January sixth episode of the DICK TRACY strip featured Dick and his family (along with Diet Smith) at Disneyland. Although it was not mentioned by name, it has been mentioned that Dick is in Southern California during this installment and the drawings of the famous Sleeping Beauty castle as well as Br'er Bear with Dick's son, Joe, seem to give the final proof.

ANIMATION FANZINES. Those fans of animation who are absolutely fanatical about the art may be missing some animation fanzines from foreign countries. Japan certainly has the largest amount of animation-oriented magazines. The oldest, ANIMAGE, began in July 1978; THE ANIME began in December 1979; MY ANIME in April 1981 and ANIMEDIA in July 1981. Fred Patten has described them as being similar to Dave Mruz's excellent American fanzine, ANIMANIA. (Japan also produces other animation fanzines that aspire to even greater heights such as ANIMEC and FANTOCHE.) If you are interested, you might browse around any Japanese community bookshops in your neighborhood or contact the CARTOON FANTASY ORGANIZATION (401 South La Brea Avenue, Inglewood, California 90301). And if you are a fan of Japanese animation or animation in general, you might also request information on the local branch of the organization nearest you.

JAPANESE FANZINES UPDATE. I've been informed that you can order Japanese animation fanzines from Books Nippan, 532 West 6th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90014. Ask for Yusi. (A 12-month subscription can run as high as $50.00 but a single issue is usually $5.00.)

STORYBOARD. I recently received a copy of the first issue of an animation fanzine titled STORYBOARD. It's produced by a Swedish seventeen-year-old named Mattias Gordon and looks pretty good. The first issue (which is totally in Swedish) features a long interview-article with Bill and Steve Melendez. Those folks interested in obtaining a copy should write to the following address: Mattias Gordon, Prastgarden Grebo, s-58590 Linkoping, SWEDEN. Anyone interested in doing some translating for me?

MICKEY'S MOUSETRAP. In Colonie, an Albany, New York suburb, there was a bar named "Mickey's Mousetrap" (which also featured a mouse with a jacket and top hat on its sign). The Disney legal department found out and slapped the bar with a suit. Co-owner Mickey Colarusso said that Disney demanded the name and the picture on the sign be changed even "though my name is Mickey and my partner's name is Mickey." The Mickeys tried putting sunglasses and a mustache on the mouse in their sign but Disney was still not satisfied so now the bar has no sign and a new name. The name? It's now known as simply the "Mousetrap."

DISNEY STOCKHOLDER'S MEETING. Thanks to Dapper Tom Stern, I was able to attend this year's Disney Stockholder's meeting as his guest. I don't think Tom will be willing to ferry me to next year's meeting because it'll be held at the Contemporary Hotel in Disneyworld-Florida in order to celebrate the opening of EPCOT. Anyway, this year's meeting (held January 28th at the Anaheim Convention Center, across the street from Disneyland) was filled with information. Apparently, 1981 was the second most successful year (financially) in the company's history despite the week showing of some of its films.

WHO CENSORED ROGER RABBIT? Slides were shown from several Disney films in production. One of the most intriguing was a feature entitled WHO CENSORED ROGER RABBIT? (Apparently Disney is unaware that Roger Rabbit is the secret identity of Captain Carrot, DC's newest hero.) The premise of the film is that animated characters are real and exist in the same reality as live-action characters. A producer is found dead and Roger Rabbit is framed for the crime. He teams up with a live-action detective to clear himself. (To add to his problems, Roger's wife falls in love with the detective.) The film is populated with characters like Baby Herman, a forty-year-old who has been playing baby parts for his entire life in animated films. The drawing style is highly exaggerated and the film has the potential for being outstanding fun for animation fans. Right now it's planned for release around Christmas, 1983.

DISNEY ANIMATION. Once again, the board of directors emphasized its commitment to animation and promised that there would be a new animated feature every eighteen months to two years. Pencil tests were shown from THE BLACK CAULDRON and MICKEY'S CHRISTMAS CAROL but no mention was made of the fact that there may be another massive walkout from the animation department. Don Bluth led a much-publicized walkout several years ago and apparently conditions which led to the walkout haven't improved despite promises to the contrary. (By the way, the pencil test animation was beautifully animated and I think we'll all be in for a treat when these cartoons are released.)

BOOK NEWS. Leslie Carbarga, author of THE FLEISCHER STORY, has been trying to buy back the rights to the book from Nostalgia Press so that he can revise, redesign and republish the book. However, with the death of Woody Gelman who WAS Nostalgia Press, that situation has become more difficult than might be imagined since the family is trying to sell off the entire company and is not presently interested in negotiations for one book. A rumor around the L.A. area is that Jeff Lenburg has been having trouble getting his money from Arlington House for his ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ANI-

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TO CELEBRATE TCR'S 200th ISSUE WE WILL GIVE YOU ONE YEAR FREE OF YOUR FAVORITE COMIC IF YOU MENTION TCR.

MATED CARTOON SERIES, and this may be one of the reasons the discounted book was recently offered by Publisher's Central at a discount. Marcus Wielage, the King of L.A. video, is presently working on a book about the Disney animated shorts which will include all the production information and a plot synopsis. Mark Kausler has volunteered to help him so that every animator who worked on each short will be credited and not just the chief animators. Whether this will be an illustrated effort or not will depend upon current negotiations with the Disney organization.

FANTASTIC FOUR CORRECTIONS. Those folks who have read my article on the Fantastic Four in animation in Fantaco's FANTASTIC FOUR CHRONICLES may be interested in a few corrections I've recently had pointed out to me. While Phil Hahn and Jack Hanrahan wrote the Hanrahan wrote the Hanna-Barbera FANTASTIC FOUR show, they only wrote half the episodes. The other half were written by Joe Ruby and Ken Spears (who later formed Ruby-Spears). The voice of Herbie the Robot on the De-Patie-Freleng show was Frank Welker.

LANTZ PEWTER. Comic Reader Tom Lapsley sent me some interesting material including a catalogue from Hudson (321 Central Street, Hudson, MA 01749), a company that specializes in pewter figures. Its current catalogue features a selection of Lantz creations including a special limited-edition Woody Woodpecker statuette which was sculpted by Lantz's brother, Michael (a past president of the National Sculpture Society). Hudson cast it and Michael presented it to Walter on November 25, 1980. The statuette goes for $150 while the smaller pewter figures of Woody, Andy Panda, Chilly Willy, etc. cost $15.00 each. All of this was done to help celebrate Woody's fortieth birthday. (He first appeared in KNOCK KNOCK, an Andy Panda cartoon, November 25, 1940.) Tom also sent a clipping about Will Vinton's claymation commercials of Ben Franklin for the Ben Franklin bank. Thanks, Tom.

DISNEY HONORED AGAIN. The Los Angeles Film Teachers Association honored Walt Disney Studios at the group's third annual award banquet February 12th at the Sportmen's Lodge in Studio City. LAFTA is a group of educators and parents who teach films or use film for discussing various school subjects. The organization claims more than 500 members.

FRENCH ANIMATION MAGAZINE GOES AMERICAN. There is a French animation magazine called BANC-TITRE ("animation stand") that has been appearing for about four years. There used to be five issues a year. The magazine has now decided that interest in animation is so strong that it is going to up its publication frequency to eleven issues a year and the magazine will become bi-lingual (French and English). Subscriptions are going to be arranged through ASIFA-Hollywood, 1258 No. Highland Avenue, Hollywood, CA 90038.

ANOTHER ANIMATION DEATH. It was brough to my attention by Jerry Beck and Will Friedwald that Morey Reden passed away last December 12th. Reden began his career as a teenager at the Walt Disney Studios and for many years was at Paramount and other studios on the East Coast. For the past thirteen years he had been an animator at Hanna-Barbera. (By the way, Beck has put together a "feature" consisting of Warner Bros.' censored cartoons. (Y'know, the ones filled with sexual, violent, racial and war propaganda content too extreme for television.) The "feature" was very successful in New York and UA's pay-cable, home video and foreign TV departments have expressed interest in distributing this show. While Beck was tracking down the original negatives for this show, he came across the left and right negative to the 3-D Popeye cartoon, POPEYE, THE ACE OF SPACE, and UA is ordering new prints to be made!)

DON'T FORGET. Don't forget to send news, rumors and notes of good cheer about animation to Jim Korkis, 707 West Doran, Glendale, CA 91203. Congratulations to Jerry and Mike on TCR's 200th issue!

Pacific Coming Comics

CAPTAIN VICTORY No. 5, July. The battle to contain the hive rages on as the Rangers join forces with the Fighting Airborne, using advanced galactic weaponry for the first time on Earth. Also: another chapter starring the Goozlebobber. Art and story by Jack Kirby, inks by Ron Thibedeaux. Kirby and Thibedeaux did the cover. [April]

TCR Mailboat

MARV WOLFMAN, Flushing, NY: I'm sure by now you're aware of the mistake in #198, but in case you aren't --I'm not writing SWAMP THING, Marty Pasko is. What I am writing (along with THE NEW TEEN TITANS and ACTION COMICS) is--THE DARK [now NIGHT] FORCE, a new mystery/horror/supernatural/adventure book which is being drawn by Gene Colan whom, you might remember, worked with me for a number of years on some other mystery/etc. comic at Marvel.

We're trying some rather different things with THE NIGHT FORCE, which is why I'm probably spending more time pushing/plugging/hyping this series than I ever have before. Beside the basic format which allows us to change characters with every story (the first story lasts seven issues), which allows us to do stories set in different time periods, allows us to experiment in kinds of stories and even approaches to stories, for the first time even before Gene Colan began to draw issue #1, an entire story was worked out in advance. Now, I know most writers work out the details of a story, some work out the rough details only, some all the details, but I think it's safe to say all writers pretty much write the actual plots and scripts as they are needed on a month-to-month basis. In the case of THE DARK FORCE, I wrote all seven plots one after another. This allowed a tighter plotting and the ability to go back and forth correcting things before they are committed to paper. The plots are sitting up at DC to be sent to Gene Colan as he needs them, but an entire story has been done.

As I say, we're working very hard on this book so I do want to make sure people who enjoyed the Dracula series Gene and I did know which book it is we're doing. I hope in time people will think THE NIGHT FORCE is up to the high standards we set on TOMB OF DRACULA.

About your issue: I agree with Mark Evanier about Lou Mougin's writing. He did it again with your Charlton piece. Quite a good article and the kind I'm specifically interested in. Lou mentioned that Nature Boy was created by Jerry Siegel. I believe that Mr. Muscles was as well. I remember as a kid reading the origin of Mr. Muscles and being caught up with the concept of this kid who had polio and was told he'd never move a muscle again, forcing himself not only to move his finger, then his hand, then his whole body, but forcing himself to become the best there is. The story gripped me as few others did and I had the same feeling about that corny character as I did about Superman--a character that has always been my favorite. It made sense years later when I had heard they were both created by Siegel, who seemed to be able to get right into the meat of what makes a hero. I recently managed to find MR. MUSCLES (Len Wein helped find NATURE BOY for me--and got it autographed by Buscema and gave it to me for a birthday present) and though the majority of the book was certainly stiff by today's standards, the origin still worked.

Keep up articles such as this if you can. I understand that during Capa Alpha's many years, checklists

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and in-depth articles of this kind were routinely done. Any way to pick up the reprinting rights from their writers?

Having read the COMIC READER since Jerry Bails first mailed me issue #13 all those many years ago, I can truthfully say you're doing a fine job. Now, if you could only get the news out LONG BEFORE the comics come out, then everything would be perfect.

[Thanks for the compliments, and we're working on the delay between news and releases. Certainly, a large part of our improvement of late has been the contributions of our many fine columnists, and Lou Mougin's current series has had almost universal praise. The articles you're referring to from Capa Alpha aren't familiar to me except when they've been given to us by the individual writers for our own entertainment since we were never members of KA. But here's an open invitation to anybody who's done anything of that nature for any APA that they'd like to see get a wider audience (though at absolutely no financial compensation), we'd love to run them.

I must admit that I have done some editing of the Back-Seat series, and the references to the early history of Charlton and the '50s heroes were mostly my own. Yes, Siegel did write the first NATURE BOY and MR. MUSCLES issues, which appeared in early '55. The nature (if you'll excuse the pun) of these characters -- at least in Siegel's origin stories -- is very much an example of the differences between today's characters and those of the '40s, '50s and '60s. The appeal of the polio origin of Mr. Muscles is blatant in its appeal to the juvenile audience's idea of what is sophisticated, mature and sensitive. I know that what is commonly thought of today as corny or overly-sentimental in comics of the '60s affected me greatly when I was part of the audience the Superman family of comics, for example, were being aimed at. I'm sure your own recollection of Mr. Muscles is forever colored by the fact that you read it when you were nine. Today's characters are saddled with the fact that a large number of fans are well beyond the age-group comics used to be targeted, and thus are so afraid to resort to anything that might be construed to be sentimental that they end up lifeless, spiritless and unmoving to many of us whose first love in comics were those very same kind of sentimental characters. Small wonder that so little of what's happened in the last few years has had much impact on many of us "old-timers."

I'm glad to hear that NIGHT FORCE is being done in the way you've described. Part of the Stan Lee legacy has been far too many comics done as multi-parters with little or no idea of how or why a story should end. Or not end, in some cases. I hope your tenure on the book is at least as long on the Night Force as it was on Dracula. MT]

DAN MISHKIN, Lansing, MI: I want to thank you for your prompt publication of my comments correcting TCR's AMETHYST news item. We'd like people to get the idea that the book is something to look forward to and I very much appreciate the opportunity to put out the amended word.

Since I wrote you last, I've seen some of Ernie's completed pages for the AMETHYST preview and they're awfully good; as I said before, the look is different from what we're used to seeing.

By the way, a bit of information your readers might be interested in: Gary and I have just finished the script for DC COMICS PRESENTS #50, a special book-length story teaming up Superman and Clark Kent. As they said in the old days, "Not a dream! Not a hoax! Not an imaginary story!" We hope Curt Swan will be available to draw it.

[The advantage to the news magazines in the new royalties system is that now that creators have a stake in the profit picture, we'll be getting more advance information about the new projects. So thank you, Dan, for letting us have an advance idea of your new book. MT]

PETE MORISI, Staten Island, NY: Many thanks for your interesting article on my THUNDERBOLT strip. It brought back many (fond?) memories of tortured thinking, late-night artwork, and a burning desire to present a realistic costumed hero to the public.

From the outset, T-Bolt was a part-time venture. I had a full-time job elsewhere, that would have restricted my pick-up and/or delivery movements to DC or Marvel. Charlton had a mail-in policy, so I chose to stay with them. My full-time job also prevented me from using my name in comics, so my initials, "PAM," became my signature.

Dick Giordano, my editor at the time, put his brilliant mind to work and latched onto the incoming "Who Is PAM?" mail and made it a running controversy in the T-BOLT letter pages. All of my Charlton editors (Masulli, Giordano, Gentile and Wildman) trusted me to do a "job" for them, and I like to think I gave it my best shot.

Your mention of "PAM's writing skills probably pulled more strokes from Lester Dent than Stan Lee" leaves me at a loss. Pardon my ignorance, but I don't know who Lester Dent is. Please explain.

That story sequence (where a tied-up T-Bolt bites the cobra that is about to bite him) was taken from an old Bill Everett strip. I just couldn't resist "playing it again" for the newer comics readers.

Although I created T-Bolt, the character was never mine to own, due to Charlton's company policy. Now, however, as of December 28, 1981, Charlton Publisher John Santangelo has given me the world rights to T-Bolt, with the exception of a few foreign market outlets.

So, the possibility of seeing T-Bolt again exists. He can do it...he must do it...he--oh, well, thanks again for your interest in Peter Cannon ...THUNDERBOLT.

[Lou was not alone in his admiration for the book. Thunderbolt, perhaps because he was for me Charlton's first really good super-hero, was always my favorite among the Charlton characters. I'm glad to hear that you've finally gotten control back of your character, as it will assure that no well-intended but off-the-mark attempts at reviving him for CHARLTON BULLSEYE will be made. I can still recall the disappointment I felt with the issues of T-BOLT you did not draw or write, as they bore so little resemblance to the character I knew.

Lester Dent is the real name of longtime DOC SAVAGE and AVENGER author Kenneth Robeson. MT]

GEORGE EVANS, Levittown, NY: Since you continue to send me the READER, obviously you assume I'm alive and functional still. I hope you're not alone, because I keep writing and drawing the SECRET AGENT CORRIGAN strip, and hope someone, somewhere, enjoys it.

Which, in part, is the point--or the points--of this letter: A. I am told that a collection of the strip since I've been doing it has been printed in Italy under the title "Phil Corrigan Ritorna." I don't know the publisher or price at this point, but it runs from 4/2/80 through 7/2/81. B. Though sort of typecast in war and horror comics the latter part of my stint there, I am an original science-fiction and fantasy freak, and have edged a bit of that into two of the Corrigan stories thus far, with another coming up in mid '82. C. A big, fat collection of Manly Wade Wellman eerie, fantasy, and weird tales is to appear in March, with between 25 and 30 illustrations by me. The number's not certain because they had to cut a tale or two because of sheer book-size. Some of the pictures (full-page) turned out pretty good, I think. The publisher is Carcosa, P.O. Box 1046, Chapel Hill, NC, and the editor is none but Karl Edward Wagner, whose "Kane" books and many others most buffs will know.

[Continued on page 66]

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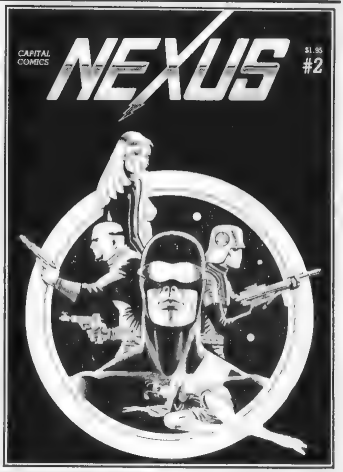

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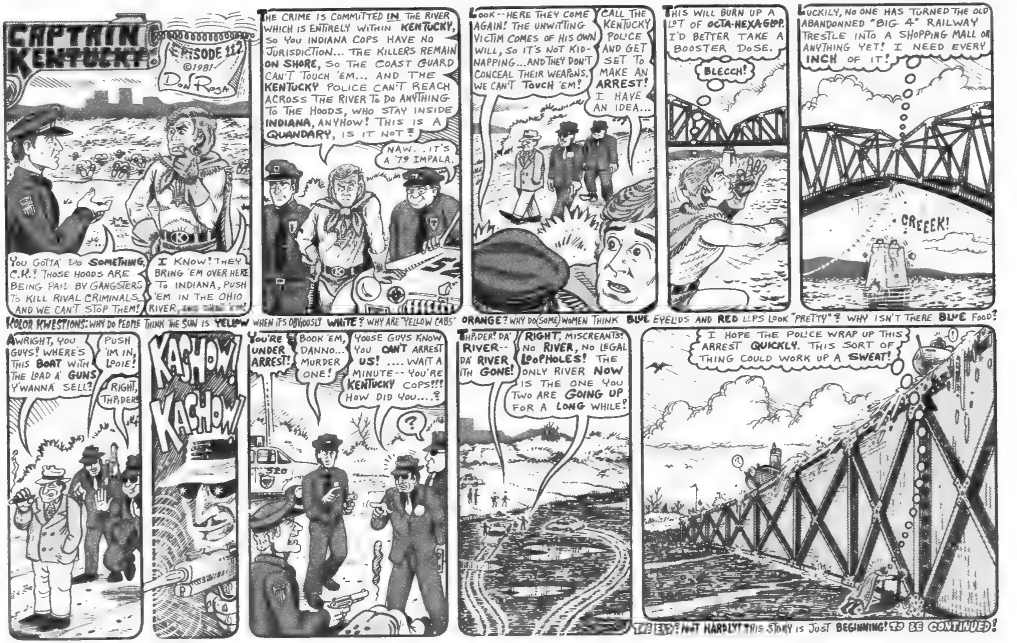
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
EPISODE 112
©1981 Don Rosa
YOU GOTTA' DO SOMETHING, C.K.! THOSE HOODS ARE BEING PAID BY GANGSTERS TO KILL RIVAL CRIMINALS, AND WE CAN'T STOP THEM!
I KNOW! THEY BRING 'EM OVER HERE TO INDIANA, PUSH 'EM IN THE OHIO RIVER, AND THEN 'EM
THE CRIME IS COMMITTED IN THE RIVER, WHICH IS ENTIRELY WITHIN KENTUCKY. SO YOU INDIANA COPS HAVE NO JURISDICTION... THE KILLERS REMAIN ON SHORE, SO THE COAST GUARD CAN'T TOUCH 'EM... AND THE KENTUCKY POLICE CAN'T REACH ACROSS THE RIVER TO DO ANYTHING TO THE HOODS, WHO STAY INSIDE INDIANA, ANYHOW! THIS IS A QUANDARY, IS IT NOT?
NAW.. IT'S A '79 IMPALA.
LOOK--HERE THEY COME AGAIN! THE UNWITTING VICTIM COMES OF HIS OWN WILL, SO IT'S NOT KIDNAPPING... AND THEY DON'T CONCEAL THEIR WEAPONS. WE CAN'T TOUCH 'EM!
CALL THE KENTUCKY POLICE AND GET SET TO MAKE AN ARREST! I HAVE AN IDEA...
THIS WILL BURN UP A LOT OF OCTA-HEXA-GOOP. I'D BETTER TAKE A BOOSTER DOSE.
BLECCH!
LUCKILY, NO ONE HAS TORNED THE OLD ABANDONNED "BIG 4" RAILWAY TRESTLE INTO A SHOPPING MALL OR ANYTHING YET! I NEED EVERY INCH OF IT!
CREEEK!
KOLOR KWESTIONS: WHY DO PEOPLE THINK THE SUN IS YELLOW WHEN IT'S OBVIOUSLY WHITE? WHY ARE "YELLOW CABS" ORANGE? WHY DO SOME WOMEN THINK BLUE EYELIDS AND RED LIPS LOOK "PRETTY"? WHY ISN'T THERE BLUE FOOD?
AWRIGHT, YOU GUYS! WHERE'S THIS BOAT WITH THE LOAD A' GUNS Y'WANNA SELL?
PUSH 'IM IN, LOOIE!
RIGHT, THADDEUS!
KASHOW KASHOW
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!
BOOK 'EM, DANNO... MURDER ONE!
YOOSE GUYS KNOW YOU CAN'T ARREST US! .... WAIT A MINUTE-- YOU'RE KENTUCKY COPS!!! HOW DID YOU...?
?
320
MURDER DA' RIVER-- DA' RIVER IS GONE!
RIGHT, MISCREANTS! NO RIVER, NO LEGAL LOOPHOLES! THE ONLY RIVER NOW IS THE ONE YOU TWO ARE GOING UP FOR A LONG WHILE!
I HOPE THE POLICE WRAP UP THIS ARREST QUICKLY. THIS SORT OF THING COULD WORK UP A SWEAT!
THE END? NOT HARDLY! THIS STORY IS JUST BEGINNING! TO BE CONTINUED!

CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
by Dan Reed ©1981 Big Dog Books
C.K. IS USING THE "BIG 4" BRIDGE TO DAM THE OHIO RIVER SO THE POLICE CAN ARREST SOME BAD GUYS!
I CAN'T WASTE TIME EXPLAINING EXACTLY WHY... BUT IF YOU DON'T ALREADY KNOW, IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT, SO NYAAH!
THE RIVER IS REALLY BEGINNING TO BUILD UP BEHIND MY ERSATZ DAM... I CAN FEEL MY STRENGTH WANING. I'D BEST TAKE ANOTHER BOOSTER DOSE OF "OCTA-HEXA-GLOP"!
POP!
TWANG
CREAK
OH, PEACHY!
NNNGH... IT'S STARTING TO GO! I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO RELEASE IT GENTLY... OR THE POWER LEFT TO FLY OUT OF THE WAY! THE MOST I CAN HOPE FOR IS A FEW SECONDS MORE OF HIGH SPEED RUNNING!
BOING!
CREEEK
SNAP!
POP!
IT'S EVERY HERO FOR HIMSELF!
GRUNGE!
C.K.'S THEORY: SO, WHY DO PEOPLE GO SHOPPING THE DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING? CROWDED STORES, JAMMED PARKING? I SUSPECT SOME DERIVE SUBCONSCIOUS PLEASURE AS ANONYMOUS MEMBERS OF HUGE THRONGS! THE CATTLE SYNDROME.
OKAY, COPPERS, YA GOT US, FAIR AN' SQUARE!
THPIDER? THE COPTH ARE RUNNIN' OFF LIKE BATTH OUTTA HADESTH!
COURSE DEY IS, LOOIE? DEY KNOWS NOT TA MESS WIT DA SPIDER! C'MON -- LET'S SNATCH DERE WHEELS AN' TAKE IT ON DA LAM 'FORE DEY COMES BACK?
UUUHH... THPIDER TAKE A THQUINT..
LOOK OUT, LOUISVILLE! HERE COMES THE JET FLOOD... BUT ALL IN A SPLIT SECOND!
IT HAS COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT THE "BIG 4" BRIDGE, A RAILROAD TRESTLE, IS NOT COMPLETELY SOLID ON THE BOTTOM AND WOULD MAKE A LOUSY DAM. WELL, EXCUUUUSE ME!!!

FANDOM CONFIDENTIAL

with Jim Engel & Chuck Fiala

this month: MURRAY BISHOFF UPDATE

OUR SPECIAL GUEST THIS MONTH IS AN OLD FRIEND, MURRAY BISHOFF. WHO WAS ONE OF FANDOM'S BEST KNOWN PERSONALITIES, MUCH RESPECTED FOR HIS "HOO WHAT?" COLUMN, WHICH RAN REGULARLY IN THE BUYER'S GUIDE. HE WAS ONE OF FANDOM'S STAUNCHEST SUPPORTERS, AND A TRUE COMICS SCHOLAR
A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO HOWEVER, MURRAY LEFT HIS ACTIVE ROLE IN FANDOM. FOR OTHER PURSUITS, AND IN THIS FANDOM'S CONFIDENTIAL, WELL, FIND OUT JUST WHAT HE'S BEEN UP TO. MURRAY, WELCOME!
THANK YOU, JIM + CHUCK. IT WAS KIND OF YOU TO INVITE ME. I'D LIKE TO SAY HELLO TO MANY OF MY OLD CHUMS, ESPECIALLY ALAN LIGHT.
MURRAY, I'M SURE BY THIS TIME THE MORE OBSERVANT OF OUR AUDIENCE HAVE NOTED YOUR GENERALLY DISGUSTING PHYSICAL APPEARENCE AND SEEMINGLY DISREGARDED FOR MATTERS OF PERSONAL HYGIENE AND PUBLIC DECOR. YOU DIDN'T USE TO LOOK SO FILTHY. WHAT GIVES?
YES, UNLESS YOU'VE BEEN SIGNED TO STAR IN THE BROADWAY ADAPTATION OF F & GYPPERS, I'M WORTHY "HAPPY HOOLIGAN," IT WOULD SEEM YOU'VE TAKEN A TURN FOR THE WORSE!
THERE'S NO NEED TO MAKE WORDS, FELLOWS, I'LL ADMIT I'VE FALLEN ON HARD TIMES. YOU SEE, I'VE SPENT THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS ON THE "STREET OF FORGOTTEN FANS." IT'S A TRASH TIME, AND A FATE I HOPE YOUR READERS CAN AVOID... ORIGINALLY MY INTEREST IN COMICS LAY IN THE CLASSICS...
THE SPIRIT, SIMON + KIRBY, E.C., JERRY MARUO, NEAL ADAMS, BARRY SMITH, YOU KNOW... BUT IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I'D READ EVERYTHING OF ANY QUALITY, AND STILL I LONGED FOR MORE, MORE, MORE! MY FRIENDSHIPS SEEMED TO DISAPPEAR... AND I DIDN'T CARE. WHAT I BOUGHT AS LONG AS IT WAS A COMIC BOOK! $45.00 FOR "FREZ" #3? NO PROBLEM! $200.00 FOR A COVERLESS COPY OF "SO-SO-MAN #1"? I'LL TAKE IT! NO PRICE WAS TOO MUCH TO PAY (WHEN I NEEDED A COMIC)! I TRADED MY CAR FOR A COMPLETE SET OF "LIL' FARLEY" CAKE. I ACTUALLY BLEW A DATE ON $47 WARREN BOOKS! ALAN WOULD GIVE ME THE RUP AT CONS, TO AVOID BEING SEEN WITH THE CRAZY JAG. A STACK OF "KONA, MONARCH OF MONSTER ISLE" I FRANKLY WEAR BANKRUPT, AND WHEN I TRIED TO SCRAM MY 2 YR. OLD SON FOR A "DEVIL DINOSAUR," MY WIFE PACKED + LEFT ME. I WAS SO BURNT OUT, I HAD TO HIRE CAT YRONWODE TO GHOST MY COLUMN, AND LIGHT EVENTUALLY DUMPED ME FOR HER...
SO THERE I WAS — BROKE, OUT OF WORK... I'D LOST MY FAMILY, MY FRIENDS, AND THAT STUPID HAT I USED TO WEAR. EVENTUALLY I HIT BOTTOM, AND ENDED UP ON THE STREET OF FORGOTTEN FANS, SHOVELING MY DAYS LIQUID IN THE GUTTER WITH A ROLLED-UP COPY OF "U-MERGED"... SPENDING MY NIGHTS IN A GARBAGE CAN, WRAPPED IN A COPY OF "U-MAN-O: GIANT COMICS" TO KEEP OUT THE COLD. COMIC COLLECTING IS A DISEASE, FELLOWS, AND SOMEDAY SOCIETY WILL WAKE UP AND HELP US BEFORE WE WIND UP ON THE WORLD'S PAPER DRIVE PILES...
NO SIVE. RILLY.
IT'S A SAD PICTURE, YOU PRIG MURRAY, AND IT MAKES A COUPLE OF B.N.F.S LIKE CHUCK AND I PAUSE TO ASK OURSELVES — COULD A COUPLE OF FUJI-LOVING FAN FLUMMYMEN LIKE US END UP LIKE THE HIDEOUS PILE OF SCUM SEATED AT OUR TABLE TODAY?
YEAH! AND WHEN YOU THINK OF ALL THE OTHER OAFS + FAMOUS FAN FAVES WHO RESIDE THERE WITH YOU...
RAY MILLER... JOHN FANTUCCHIO, DR. JERRY BAILS, TIM CORRIGAN, JOHN ADKINS RICHARDSON... G.B. LOVE, BILSO WHITE, JOY HOLIDAY, BILL O. WILSON... MARK ANTHONY WAID, THE TEXAS TRIO... JIM VAN HISE... AND OF COURSE WE'LL SOON BE JOINED BY THE ENTIRE STAFF OF THE COMIC READER, WHICH HAS BEEN BOUGHT OUT BY GARY GROTH, WHO INTENDS TO TURN IT INTO ANOTHER ALL-MAIL MAGAZINE.
PLOP!
NOW WHAT?

ALMANACCO TOPOLINO DI NOVEMBRE
INFATTI NON SONO ALTRO CHE BIGLIETTI DI BANCA!
AUGURIAMO CHE NON PRENDANO LA VIA DEGLI AEROPLANI!
CHE ORRIBILE!
BURRASCA LA SCIOCCHERA DEI "BARBARI"! E PROLUNGA ENORMEMENTE LA TRAVERSATA!
A CROCIERA INAUGURATA, È STATA SEMPRE MA INDIVENTI-SABILE!

ALMANACCO TOPOLINO DI NOVEMBRE
MANO AI BIGLIOLI! GETTATE I DOLLARI IN MARE!
SSFFRUSCHH
GUARDATE LA SULLA PUPPE! È AMELIA!
ARRENDITI, FAFFERO, NE NON HAI SCAMPO. HO SCATENATO LA FURIA DEGLI ELEMENTI!
ALZATI, ZIO PAPERINO! NON È IL MOMENTO DI TUFFARSI!
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[Continued from page 61]

You might find space to note a bit of this in an issue, as there seem to be a couple of people out there who still recall my existence, and a card or letter comes by every now and then.

[I'm sure it's no consolation, but when we were still discussing the possibility of adding new strips to the GAZETTE section of TCR, CORRIGAN was one of the few we felt would be beneficial both as a drawing card and as entertainment. With our distribution problems, that hasn't been possible, but we'd like you to know we miss your strip.

And as a coincidental note, one of the unpublished VIKING COMMANDO strips you did over Dick Ayers' layouts will be appearing in next month's UNKNOWN SOLDIER, as they attempt to clear their inventory in preparation for that book's ensuing demise. MT]

DON NEWTON, Mesa, AZ: Paging Bob Overstreet...Historical Note: That was MY cover on DETECTIVE #514. It's bad enough that I seldom get to do a cover, but to add insult to injury, my name is cropped off and someone else gets credit! Sigh!

[Oops! Our apologies, Don! That's the credit we were told, and to tell the truth, with Dick Giordano's inking I couldn't tell they were wrong. I guess you'll be signing the next one a little further up into the picture, eh?

And Overstreet notwithstand, I hope I remember it was your cover when I do DETECTIVE COMICS for my upcoming index project. MT]

D. JOHAN L. DE JONG, Van Boshuizenstraat 551 hs, 1082 Av Amsterdam, HOLLAND: Thanks for printing my last letter. One slight mistake, as my handwriting was probably unclear. Murry's new s.f. story was published in MICKEY MOUSE #209, not 205. By the way, #210 is drawn by Paul Murry too and features the Phantom Blot in a new story.

I hate to contradict you, but the last STAR HAWKS daily was of May 2, 1981. The strip has a decent, even happy ending, since Rex Jaxon found himself a new love, an ambassadress this time. I wonder why Rex always picks up commandeering women with a higher rank than his?

So far I got all Whitman comics of the disaster year 1980, all titles I collect that is, except THE BLACK HOLE #5 and 6. However, these last two were published in Europe all right, in a German language edition. This double issue, DAS SCHWARZE LOCH (The Black Hole) No. 3contains both #5 and 6's stories. The beauty of its coloring is beyond words. The art by Dan Spiegle is dazzling. As follows: in the parallel universe, the heroine finally finds the double of her father on a planet populated by semi-immortals and unicorns, but Daddy turns out not to be what he seems. And so does at least one of the other participants. This tale is neatly brought to an end; in fact #3,4,5, and 6 are part of one long continuing story which ends with the heroine and her companions returning to their own universe through the Black Hole again.

Has anybody located the American editions? Those who did not can still order DAS SCHWARZE LOCH No. 3 from its publisher, Ehapa Verlag Gmbh, Betriebsabteilung Apart, Postfach 1215, 7000 Stuttgart 1, Bundesrepublik Deutschland. The mag costs about one American dollar plus postage. Three stories intended for the cancelled DAISY AND DONALD #48 (not #49) have already appeared in the Italian Disney mags, bearing their original markings, which confirms my suspicion that an American Disney story does not necessarily have to be published in the United States in order to get printed in Europe!

The fact that Whitman "missed" the merchandizing boat on the FLASH GORDON movie might be due to the movie's failure at the box office.

To return to European Disney comics once more: About the Italian Barks "imitator" I mentioned in my last letter: All of his wonderful creations have an unmistakable grandeur and epic style which makes them the longest Disney stories ever to appear in comic books. His masterpiece is the "Ocean of Money": Scrooge in need of some exercise turns his colossal moneybin into an indoor ocean of cash and goes sailing on it. Glamorous Magica de Spell, disguised as an Arabian princess, succeeds in smuggling a magic dime into the ocean. At first it only causes the banknotes to fly lazily like seagulls, but afterwards it creates a hurricane. Magica appears as the "Seawitch," and Scrooge nearly drowns in wave after wave of his own money. Eventually, he and the nephews are rescued from certain death by Gyro Gearloose and Donald. Even the parallel gags with "Helper" are there! This artist's latest work is in a sort of EC-style, about Donald encountering a head-like being from another dimension and wooing a lady of mastodonic proportions. Three photostats of this artist are enclosed.

Many (other) Italian Disney artists are bending the Disney code a little I think. In a recent issue of TOPOLINO is featured a horror (!) story with Donald Duck. Donald is dragging a strange-looking box into Scrooge's moneybin. Once there, it turns out to be a coffin

(1) and out of it jumps a vampire (1). Though a duck vampire, this otherwise realistic character is not funny at all, only frightening.

In Europe, Disney's high sales figures contrast oddly with the low figures (and prestige) of super-hero comics over here. First it is fair to state my bias: Generally, I do not like super-heroes; they simply leave me cold as ice.

Except for Britain, super-heroes were never very popular in Europe. In explanation, elaborate theories have been circulated: "Superheroes remind Europe of imperialism and Nietsche's "Übermensch" (Overman or Superman) which in turn points to fascism and national socialism." In my opinion, the last theory is over-elaborate; too clever and too casual to be of any use. Besides, I really do not know whether Nietsche prefigures fascism, I have read too little of him to judge.

However, the imperialist (read: the United States) part is not too far off the mark. Interpreting your remark: "European" super-heroes are bound up somehow with the United States (leaving aside the fact that a more nationalistic Europeanized super-hero would seem utterly ridiculous to many Europeans; Captain Europe indeed!), this orientation towards the U.S. is a formidable handicap since anti-Americanism has reached its highest and most hysterical point so far in Europe. Even in supposedly moderate circles, intense hatred is fostered against anything even remotely reminding anyone of America, including the English language! Both in comics and politics, our continents are hopelessly drifting apart, to my personal sorrow. To give an example: In Holland, Super Goof is banned from Disney comics! This is an extremist's view, however, since other European countries such as France, Germany and Italy freely feature Super Goof in their Disney mags.

On the other hand, the Italian Disney artists have gone as far as to create an independent Disney super-hero: Paperinik (Superduck) who is Donald Duck donning a super-hero costume and using super-hero gadgets invented by Gyro Gearloose! This character is an odd mixture of the old French (super?) villain Fantomas, Zorro and Superman. The Lois part is played by Daisy, who occasionally wears a super-hero outfit too, in the interests of feminism, of course. Paperinik if often in combat with the Beagle Boys, Scrooge's unfair competitor Rockerduck and sometimes the greedy Uncle Scrooge himself! Unlike Superman, Paperinik is not above (very moderate) personal gain, for his other ego Donald, that is. Which accentuates the slightly immoral nature of Italy's home-made Disney characters.

Just for the record: SPACE FAMILY ROBINSON #55 reprints issue #15 and #56 reprints #16. One request I would like to make: Has anyone either photocopies or the real thing of the MARCH OF COMICS issues (#320, 328, 352 and 404) of SPACE FAMILY ROBINSON? Since it was created by Barks, I collect it. If someone has, please contact me.

[The Barks imitator is so good that it makes me very sad that there apparently isn't any interest over here in making the exchange of Disney material mutual (with the notable exception of the several issues of MICKEY AND THE SLEUTH several years back). While I appreciate the reprints (at least in contrast to the rather disappointing new material which occasionally runs in UNCLE SCROOGE) it would seem a natural for the monthly SCROOGE book.

And I don't want to spoil things for you, but I have it on good authority, twenty years after the fact, that Barks had nothing to do with creating Space Family Robinson. The way the editor (Chase Craig) and the writer (Del Connell) of those original issues remember things, it was their idea and Barks had nothing to do with it. Of course, they may not be remembering accurately--but that's two against one. (Info courtesy of Mark Evanier.) MT]

ROD COWHAN, 2/33 Minneapolis Crescent, Maroubra, 2035, NSW, AUSTRALIA: The columns you've added recently have really fleshed out the magazine, making it much more than the "mere" newszine it started out as.

Especially welcome are the "Collecting Comics" and "A Comic Reader" segments. The former has helped me no end to finally work out the demented numbering system of the Charlton line and and my chasing of nin-existent titles, while the latter has given TCR a much-needed voice of opinion. Whether you like to voice an opinion yourselves or not, I think an editorial slant is necessary to any magazine, no matter what its subject matter.

I close by repeating T.M. Maple's query -- Whatever happened to Dick Duck?

P.S. Let's not be too hard on Charlton's "Mark-Two" Blue Beetle. I have a rather fond affection for him, probably because of the dimness of time on my memory, as a character who was theoretically sound but was badly used in practice.

But then, what do you expect from someone who likes B'wana Beast?

[Blue Beetle is also recalled with affection here, and probably by Lou Mougin as well. Again, pointing out the sillier aspects of a character doesn't necessarily have anything to do with how much we enjoyed the stories.

To answer your (and T.M. Maple's query: Dick Duck was in limbo whilst the person who held his life in his hands was otherwise occupied becoming a father for the first time. Master Calvin James Engel arrived December 28th weighing in at ten pounds, one ounce (all ready to pounce--an inside reference) and were greeted by happy parents Jim and Charis. Dick and Pavlov were kind enough to drive them to the hospital. MT]

GARY RICKER, A state resembling Saudi Arabia, U.S.A.: Just a mash note to Don Rosa and Lou Mougin for all the enjoyment they've provided these past few months! Never liked Keno Don's stuff--couldn't get past the clutter of PERTWILLABY--but #198's C.K. in Hollywood... Yikes! Wunderbar! And Mr. Mougin is expertly evoking that hopeful, tenuous time when Marvel's bloom was fading and we oldsters longed for the many-companied splendor of the Golden Age. What fun my brother and I had studying the art on the pre-Ditko BLUE BEETLE--I still have vivid memories of that hamhock-thewed super-doer in Derby, Connecticut red and blue (how I miss being able to pick out comics off the rack by printing-ink colors alone), inked in what must have been fingerpaints.

[Ah yes--but I still rather liked those Giordano covers on some of the early ones... MT]

JOHN BYRNE, Evanston, IL: As an unofficial defender of the faith, vis-a-vis Superman, I thought I might just toss in a few thoughts of my own concerning the two movies.

In the first place, I still love the original production, SUPERMAN, THE MOVIE (hereafter, simply SUPERMAN). I watch it about once a month these days and I am constantly amazed at how well it holds together. In my opinion the movie suffers only in comparison to the comic, not as a movie in itself. And I would go so far as to say that in the comparison it is the comics which suffers, being far and away an inferior version. SUPERMAN is the way the comic should be done, but alas, is not. The only real flaw in the movie, from my point of view, is Jor-El's reference to Einstein during Kal-El's trip to Earth. Assuming that to be a recording of Jor-El, however sophisticated, there is a discrepancy with the "dead thousands of your years" line. But it's not so insurmountable that I cannot simply ignore it.

SUPERMAN II does not fare nearly so well. Obviously, it suffers the same problem as the first, when set against the current four-color interpretation. Unfortunately, it also suffers when com-

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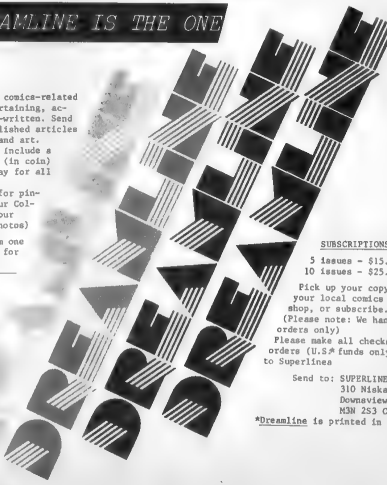

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pared to SUPERMAN, and even within its own framework. I would be tempted to dismiss it entirely but for one or two nice scenes. Clark's admission of his dual identity to Lois was wonderfully handled, and almost worth the price of admission. Moments of the fight were also well done, the most notable being the underground confrontation with Non. Unfortunately, the whole thing should really have been shown at least three times the running speed of the film, and therefore gone on at least three times longer. And it might have been better if Superman could have somehow lured the three goons into space or at least have been shown spending as much time saving civilians as his own ass.

Then there are the internal flaws which I find nearly inexcusable. Superman turning into Christopher Reeve when de-powered was most distracting. The greatest asset of SUPERMAN was that Reeve was then a more or less unknown and we saw only Superman on screen, not an actor familiar to us from other roles. Why Lester chose to re-shoot (as I understand it) the Donner version of the sequence, which had Superman emerging from the red-sun booth with his kiss-curl still intact is beyond me. There were times, especially during the improbable trek north during which Reeve looked unnervingly like Jim Shooter!

All in all then, if we are absolutely fair to both movies, judging each solely on its own merits, I give SUPERMAN an easy four stars. But I fear I find myself dealing in fractions for SUPERMAN II. That Lester has been signed for III only bodes ill.

Well, maybe SWAMP THING will be great. I mean, I always thought the comic would have looked better if Berni had drawn him with a pronounced seam across his skull, didn't you?

[Natch. Now that you've undoubtedly seen and rated SUPERMAN, THE TV MOVIE, what's your verdict? I'd be interested in hearing it. MT]

BILL KUNKEL, ELECTRONIC GAMES Magazine, 235 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003: Been a long time since I've written and as a few items of comic-type interest have come to my attention, I thought I'd drop you a line.

First of all, I'm now editing ELECTRONIC GAMES magazine for Reese Publishing here in New York. Printed 100,000 copies of the first issue and Dell, our distributor, requested a quarter million for the second, which went on sale in middle January. Our third will be on sale in mid-March and with the fourth we're monthly. Dell is calling it the biggest publishing success is five years. We cover the entire field for the consumer, from hand-helds to video and computer games.

In any case, we just learned that Parker Bros. is now into the business of producing compatable videogames for the Atari VCS. Their initial five releases contain at least four that should be interesting to your readers. First out will be THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, with gamers piloting snowspeeders and battling a column of AT-ATs. Great audio-visual tricks, including the foreground scrolling faster than the background, producing a nice illusion of depth.

The next entry will be an arcade translation, FROGGER, but the trio to follow will be JAMES BOND 007, JAWS and ta-daa, SPIDER-MAN.

Atari and DC (both Warner-owned companies, will be getting into bed on a series of comic books centered on videogames. The first three books will deal with the universes created in the videogames STAR RAIDERS, DEFENDER (a Williams game for which Atari holds home rights) and BERZERK (a Stern game similarly propriatized by Atari).

Finally comes TRON, the upcoming Disney flick about a young videogame designer (Jeff Bridges) who is thrust into a computer world (ruled by David Warner) where videogames are reality, and where he must seek the aid of Tron, mightiest of the electronic warriors (Bruce Boxleitner). Midway, Mattel and Tomy are all involved in producing electronic games based on sequences within the film. For further info, check out the major feature we'll be running in EG #5.

Anyway, thanks for the TCRs, I read them faithfully. Call me if I can be of any help in the world of hi-tech games.

[Maybe you can recommend a good eye specialist for Jerry. He's going blind playing his Atari. MT]

JOHN D.J. SCHWENGLER, 404 Tache Avenue NW, Calgary, ALTA CANADA T2K 3R8: First off, I still can't believe I won. I was sure we had some true blue DC fans, but obviously I was wrong. Therefore I will proudly wear my x-large teeshirt everywhere. Sorry I took so long to reply, but the university of Calgary frowns upon personal studies before mid-terms and papers.

Kudos to Sam Kujava for his point about Marvel's gift to the dedicated fan--the direct sales issues. I thought it was just my imagination that these were not Marvel Comics but a collection of the very worst of Charlton and Atlas. The sooner they dump these, the sooner they may use the artists and writers on more worthwhile projects (and not G.I. JOE or TEAM AMERICA). Also, I could not believe that fandom is letting DC get away with reviving ADVENTURE COMICS in digest form, while getting away with releasing at least five new titles. Why not take the limited series runs and combine them to run back to back in a normal ADVENTURE series?

In response to the "Insult to Injury Dept.," I think the topper has got to be Marvel ripping off Marvel with an X-Men companion book. On "It's" own tail, this series features (according to your own reports, those of John Byrne in his art book, and letters pages of the current X-MEN combined) "a group of teen-agers, led by Sprite, clad in the original uniforms, fighting the Hellfire Club and their Sentinel agents, continually." Who says creativity is abundant in the comics industry?

Finally, I hope R. Blabbit caught ABC's four-hour version of SUPERMAN. The additional 49 minutes of footage certainly added new thrills (too bad Warner's videotape version doesn't) and established better continuity for SUPERMAN II. Whoever made the commercial cuts decision certainly used both discretion and good taste, using natural breaks and divisions. And the cliff-hanger at the end of the first part was superb (except for those of us taping it). Only one qualm: wasn't Kal-El naked when he landed? And did you notice Captain Kirk beam on and off MORK AND MINDY on February 18th?

And now to Germany of the renaissance.

[Anyone who missed the four-hour version of SUPERMAN missed a fine show, different enough from the original version to make up for the fact that pay-TV had shown the movie for nearly two years previous. Anyway, Rona caught it, but since I'd only seen it twice I did not catch all the added bits. But between Jerry Sinkovec and Don Rosa, I've got a list of most of the additions and the few cuts. Here are the highlights:

Trevor Howard mentions that the villains are sentenced to "the Phantom Zone." (It hadn't been mentioned by name before.) Jor-El is admonished to be silent or he too would be sentenced to the Zone (he shouldn't have shut up). The Council investigates the excess power being used by Jor-El and sends off their Enforcer (in a very pointless sequence, possibly edited by ABC).

After the explosion of Krypton, the villains are shown sailing off and by Kal-El's rocket shouting to be let out for some reason (guess they didn't like being in that teflon record album jacket). On Earth, the scene which firmly establishes Kal-El's sex is cut (full frontal nudity, after all). The shot of the truck leaving the rocket in the field is much longer, as are the scenes of the Smallville High cheerleaders and football players. Clark and

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Lana speak for a longer time, and the kids' conversation is heard from the car as it drives down the road. No "Rock Around the Clock" on the soundtrack anymore!

Baby Lois and her parents, Noell Neill and Kirk Alyn finally get their lines reinstated, showing that Lana (if she ever shows up again in the series) is at least ten years older than Lois. When Pa Kent dies, Ma runs over, as well as calling Clark several times to get up. We finally see the Cheerios package full-face (explaining the credit at the end of the film).

Aerial shots of Metropolis can be seen before Clark arrives in the city. After getting his job, Clark sits down at his desk, talks to his deskmate, and Jimmy finally brings that towel to wipe up the soda on Clark's clothes. Otis is shown walking through the subway station and buying a hot dog as well as being followed by the plainclothesman, who is on the radio. In Luthor's lair, we hear and "see" Luthor's pit of beasts, as well as hearing Luthor sing "My Funny Valentine."

Much more excitement and crowd shtick is added to the rooftop/helicopter scene, as well as cheering when Superman rescues Lois. Also extended considerably is the scene involving the cat burglar, as well as the child scolding her cat before Superman rescues it, after which they talk.

In the airplane scene, more conversation in the cockpit to ground control is heard. After that night, Clark is seen in a crowd watching reports of his first-night exploits; after the editorial conference, Perry asks Jimmy to get coffee.

During Lois's interview in her garden, ABC edited the line "How big are you?" (although it had run EVERYWHERE during the film's original run as a promo clip intact). Also missing from the flying sequence (for some reason) is much of the teasingly-done slipping down Superman's arm by Lois.

Otis mentions that Superman "don't smoke and don't drink" and Lex takes the remote control away from him and yells at Valerie Perrine. The mountain shots of the rocket convoy is extended with some of Larry Hagman's lines restored; when Eve "wakes up" she asks Hagman what he had for lunch; the soldiers are told to get a stretcher and Lex tells her she did well. Otis wipes the mark he made on his arm onto his forehead.

Most exciting for me is a long sequence in the tunnel to Lex's hideout in which Superman endures trials by machine-gun fire, flame and ice. Meanwhile, the Pentagon is in a panic about the missiles heading toward New Jersey and California, calling the president, who's in a sand trap. An attempt to abort the missiles is made. Extra footage of Superman struggling in the pool is also seen.

In the theatrical version there is a scene in which Lois interviews an Indian; the whole thing was cut (again, for reasons unknown). Hollywood's famous sign is shown collapsing on some girl scouts. San Francisco houses are shown collapsing, and scenes on the school bus and the train are seen before the quake hits them. After Superman reverses the collapse of the faultline, the houses revert to their original state. More power station footage is shown, and after Superman finds and saves Jimmy, he holds him up in the air while he takes pictures. After being put down, Jimmy dodges boulders and falls in the road. Lois is shown fighting even more to get out of the car after it falls into the ditch. The Indians are grateful to see the diverted water due to Superman's blocking the dam's flooding. After Lois's "death," more footage of Superman's agonizing is shown. After he turns back time, his conversation with Lois is lengthened ("We're sorta alike...our work comes first.") When he leaves Jimmy and Lois, Jimmy says "You could at least send for a tow truck!" And after that, a long series of added lines between Jimmy and Lois ends in Jimmy taking "fashion" shots of Lois (who first shakes the dirt out of her hair), although Jimmy is out of film.

Finally, Lex is again at the piano while Otis lowers Eve into the pit of beasts, only to be rescued by Superman. The entire event is also lengthened considerably by having the opening and closing credits shown twice through in their entirety. MT]

MICHAEL W. DRAPER PECHACEK, 605 Bel Air Drive, Nashville, TN 37217: Just a line to say the READER's new look is great, but I have a short question. Why do copies of THE PHANTOM ZONE which are out on the stands carry a different logo than what we see in the reproduction in TCR? The same goes for the ALL-STAR cover --the arrow contains the word "Firebrand" but your cover showed much more. Please explain the mistakes.

To Mr. Sam Kujava: I for one enjoy the soap-opera writing in GREEN LANTERN. It rivals even the best of THE EDGE OF NIGHT. I think all comic book writers could take a pointer from the soaps!

[The PHANTOM ZONE cover logo on our copy was the original one. Apparently the logo was designed to appear with both words stacked; when the cover was pasted up, it looks as though they cut the logo in half and spread it across the top of the page. A number of people commented to me when they saw it that it was nearly impossible to read; obviously someone at DC felt the same because Todd Klein came up with a new logo. This kind of thing happens a lot in more minor ways since they send us photostats of the paste-ups and not the finished covers. In the case of ALL-STAR, as you now know, the lettering was not dropped out of the color block by the separators at World Color. MT]

EDWARD KRIEG, 14425 Brandon Court, Dale City, VA 22193: I'm writing this at the time SUPERMAN I (the first half) is due to be shown on ABC. I understand there will be material shown that was cut out. If ABC can buy SUPERMAN II, perhaps they can make it into something like what NBC did to THE GODFATHER.

A second point I would like to make is this: Why is THE PHANTOM strip still around? My paper (the Washington POST) carries it. To me, there are four problems with this strip which necessitate the strip being dropped. (1) The Phantom himself is too perfect. He has far too much an easy time of beating his enemies. (2) The blacks in the strip are either treated as something from the old TARZAN films or Sidney Poitiers. (3) The Phantom's wife is little more than a working mother a la Brenda Starr. She works for a Dr. Henry! Dr. Henry indeed? Finally, (4) the boy Rex King (?) is simply something like Bomba the Jungle Boy or Tarzan's Boy from the movies. I wish the people writing the strip could be more realistic. Oh, by the way, the POST had STAR WARS until last year--when they dropped it and added DALLAS (ptui!) and something called HELLO, CAROL--a strip by a woman, no doubt, and none too funny. Any comments on SUPERMAN I and THE PHANTOM?

[The difference between the two parts of the GODFATHER and SUPERMAN is that the former was directed entirely by one man, the latter two. Francis Ford Coppola prepared the GODFATHER SAGA, not NBC; I have a feeling the SUPERMAN on ABC was the original version before it was cut for theaters because of time, with ABC excising the objectionable (to them at least) scenes only. If II was similarly edited down from three hours to just over two by Richard Lester, it may show up that way, but I kind of doubt the two will be spliced together.

THE PHANTOM's popularity is inexplicable to me too, but it has been around for nearly fifty years, so who am I to question it. For me, the best PHANTOM stories were published in comic books (the Gold Key and King issues and the early and late issues published by Charlton); obviously, the Falks are aiming their strip at a younger audience than most superhero comics. MT]

HENRY YEO, 1025 West "I" Street,

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DEALER'S ROOM: We are currently sold out for 1982, but write now to get on the waiting list in case of cancellations and for 1983.

Ontario, CA 91762: This is a belated THANK YOU for reviewing the Warren Tufts RETROSPECTIVE in TCR a couple of issues ago. As with everybody else, I like to know the reaction to my work, be it kudos or brickbats.

It's been a lot of fun whenever I visit Tony Raiola in Long Beach, and I dig into the "box" and read the different letters he has received regarding the Warren Tufts material he has resurrected, both WTR as well as the reprint volumes. I think we have unearthed a Tufts cult following that was there all the time. Unfortunately, as with other cults, I am not sure how much THIS cult can support us in doing the rest of the Tufts works. I may be way off base, but I have hesitated examining Tony's books very closely to see how much profit he has been making on these projects. I have been doing things for him so far as a pastime for me. I have never been paid and do not ask for payment. You see, I am interested in the subject only, and am not at all sanguine about "profits" to be made in this endeavor. I keep thinking about the boys who put out the late, great Menomonee Falls GAZETTE, PHOENIX, GOLDEN FUNNIES, etc., etc. If monetary profits were the prime consideration, I would certainly say there are surer bets anywhere else.

For what it's worth, all the letters we have received have stated that WTR was a worthwhile project. The only brickbat was from the great Blackbeard which came via the grapevine. He didn't have anything to say about the contents of the book. Just unhappy that I had "duplitously" "diddled" him in doing WTR because I had bought some RUGGLES runs (1952 and 1954 xerox copies of the dailies) from him back in 1979. He still owes me $38 worth of orders of other xerox strips that he has never sent me (and of course refuses to answer any letters)! I really had expected a little more honesty from a Big Name like that, both intellectually as well as fiscally. I think his years in trying to mine his touted collection of newstrips must have addled his pate. But I digress.

Regarding the Tufts/real person thing that Dennis mentioned in the WTR, let me hasten to assure you that when I let that into the book, I was quite sure that Dennis had written it tongue-in-cheek. I also thought that it would be tongue-in-cheek funny to put it in, Tufts having been so hard to locate and pry anything out of. I am truly sorry if it all came out reading as if we had thrown you a brickbat regarding your knowledge of this exceptional artist.

I would love to be able to assemble the RUGGLES Sundays for publication. But as you are aware, UFS is singularly unhelpful in this matter. There are no proofs, they say. And trying to reproduce the newstrips in my files (yes, I have a complete run of the Tufts/RUGGLES Sundays) is just going to be so messy. It would make as much sense to try to produce reprint books from the Blackboard strip xeroxes. ANYbody would know better than that.

Mike Royer has about 100 of those delectible RUGGLES Sundays in the original art boards in his collection. I figure that the entire Tufts run has about 250 Sundays. Mike will allow Tony to shoot his originals. So that's about half the project. I don't know how to find the other approximately 150, and am not sure how to persuade the owners of those pieces to lend them for shooting whenever and wherever they can be located! I don't know where our fairy godmother is.

I sorely miss MFG and I suppose it remains a dream that it will ever be back. But is there any chance of getting Russ Heath's LONE RANGER? Our paper is the L.A. TIMES. It promotes such strips as SALLY FORTH (not Woody's), DRABBLE, DOWNSTOWN, it has dropped STAR WARS (which the paper syndicates); long ago it dropped RICK O'SHAY while it was still running. Uh, oh yes, it still has MARY WORTH in it. It's not worth looking at except the news.

In any case, thank you very much again for the WTR review.

[The RUGGLES books, which I ordered after the review, are exquisite. The balance of the strip's run is well worth republication, and I hope you can track down both customers and Sunday originals for both runs of the strip.

It still isn't within our power to acquire any new strips. And yeah, I'm afraid a GAZETTE revival is pretty improbable. Even if we had the capital necessary to try things again, I kind of doubt that the syndicates will work with us again unless we gave them large advances. Sadly, all the recent attempts to fill the GAZETTE void have similarly failed (overextending themselves just as we did), and that doesn't encourage us very much.

Actually, I'd opt for a different format; if you'll recall STREET COMIX #1 and 2 you'd have a partial idea of what format I'd like better. In today's direct-sales-only market of four-color comics like CAPTAIN VICTORY and STARSLAYER there is a market for full-color 32-pagers with a $1.00 price-tag and a circulation of around 50,000. It seems to me that the royalties most syndicates would demand are close enough to the royalties Kirby, Grell, Adams and Ditko are receiving from Pacific and should someone figure out which titles would sell (DICK TRACY, RIP KIRBY by Raymond, TERRY AND THE PIRATES, yes, even CASEY RUGGLES or strips of more recent vintage with saleable names), it wouldn't be too difficult to attract new readers. It is now obvious that a lot of collectors are more attracted to a limited-edition of anything, and the four-color, 32-page standard-size comic in particular. (No rearrangement, though -- I'd make certain the layout was more faithful to the original than in our old books, usually four dailies on a page.) Maybe somebody out there with the money will read this and decide to do it! MT]

Harvey Coming Comics

December

RICHIE RICH AND DOLLAR THE TALKING DOG No. 22, March. [12/3]

RICHIE RICH MONEY WORLD No. 56, March. [12/3]

RICHIE RICH RICHES No. 57, March. [12/3]

RICHIE RICH AND GLORIA No. 23, March. [12/10]

RICHIE RICH BILLIONS No. 45, March. [12/10]

RICHIE RICH INVENTIONS No. 23, March. [12/10]

RICHIE RICH AND CASPER No. 43, March. [12/17]

RICHIE RICH DIAMONDS No. 57, March. [12/17]

RICHIE RICH FORTUNES No. 61, March. [12/17]

RICHIE RICH No. 212, March. [12/24]

RICHIE RICH GOLD AND SILVER No. 39, March. [12/24]

SAD SACK No. 285, March. [12/24]

January

RICHIE RICH CASH No. 45, April. [12/31]

RICHIE RICH JACKPOTS No. 56, April. [12/31]

RICHIE RICH MILLIONS No. 110, April. [12/31]

THE FRIENDLY GHOST, CASPER No. 221, April. [1/7]

RICHIE RICH PROFITS No. 45, April. [1/7]

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RICHIE RICH ZILLIONZ No. 31, April. [1/7]

RICHIE RICH BANK BOOKS No. 57, April. [1/7]

RICHIE RICH DOLLARS AND CENTS No. 106, April. [1/7]

RICHIE RICH GEMS No. 41, April.

RICHIE RICH BANK BOOKS No. 57, April. [1/14]

RICHIE RICH DOLLARS AND CENTS No. 106, April. [1/14]

RICHIE RICH GEMS No. 41, April. [1/14]

RICHIE RICH No. 213, April. [1/21]

RICHIE RICH VAULTS OF MYSTERY No. 45, April. [1/21]

February
RICHIE RICH AND HIS GIRL FRIENDS No. 14, May. [1/28]

RICHIE RICH SUCCESS STORIES No. 103, May. [1/28]

SAD SACK AND THE SARGE No. 154, May. [1/28]

RICHIE RICH AND JACKIE JOKERS No. 47, May. [2/4]

RICHIE RICH MONEY WORLD No. 57, May. [2/4]

RICHIE RICH AND CADBURY, THE PERFECT BUTLER No. 22, May. [2/11]

RICHIE RICH BILLIONS No. 46, May. [2/11]

RICHIE RICH INVENTIONS No. 24, May. [2/11]

RICHIE RICH No. 214, May. [2/18]

RICHIE RICH GOLD AND SILVER No. 40, May. [2/18]

March
RICHIE RICH AND DOLLAR THE DOG No. 23, June. [2/25]

RICHIE RICH FORTUNES No. 62, June. [2/25]

RICHIE RICH RICHES No. 58, June. [2/25]

RICHIE RICH AND GLORIA No. 24, June. [3/4]

RICHIE RICH DIAMONDS No. 58, June. [3/4]

RICHIE RICH JACKPOTS No. 57, June. [3/4]

RICHIE RICH AND CASPER No. 44, June. [3/4]

RICHIE RICH MILLIONS No. 111, June. [3/11]

SAD SACK AND THE SARGE No. 155, June. [3/11]

THE FRIENDLY GHOST, CASPER No. 222, June. [3/18]

RICHIE RICH PROFITS No. 46, June. [3/18]

RICHIE RICH ZILLIONZ No. 32, June. [3/18]

RICHIE RICH No. 215, June. [3/25]

RICHIE RICH CASH No. 46, June. [3/25]

RICHIE RICH DOLLARS AND CENTS No. 107, June. [3/25]

Charlton Coming Comics

BILLY THE KID No. 149, July. [4/6]

WAR No. 34, July. [4/6]

THE FIGHTIN' 5 No. 47, August. [4/20]

GHOSTLY TALES No. 156, August. [4/20]

BATTLEFIELD ACTION No. 76, August. [4/27]

FIGHTIN' ARMY No. 159, August. [4/27]

Books

By Mark Sabljak

This is the time of year when publishers announce their plans for the first six months or so of the year. For that reason, and because I haven't got a chance to do much reading myself the past month (hey, a guy's got to make a living sometimes!) this column will be dominated by news of upcoming books.

CARTOON SCENE -- A new hard cover, large format Disney book is due from Abbeville featuring HUEY, DEWEY AND LOUIE. It will run $25 for 189 full-color pages. The foreward is by Carl Barks, and it is assumed that it will follow the style of the preceding books in the series, with reprints of material done for Western Publishing in rearranged form... Andrews and McMeel will put out a host of books to interest comic fans, including KING KAT ($5.95, paperback) the comic-strip cat that was "so obnoxious it was thrown out of the Chicago TRIBUNE" according to publicity. Also due are three new HERMAN books with $2.50 price tags: HERMAN FOR LOVERS, HERMAN FOR THE HOSPITALIZED, and HERMAN FOR PET FANCIERS. Also, a ZIGGY book, ZIGGY AND FRIENDS for $3.95 as well as THAT FAMILY CIRCUS FEELING for $3.95. From Workman, TWO GUYS FOOLING AROUND WITH THE MOON by B. Kliban, including more than 100 cartoons and the illustrated serial-thriller, CORNISH GAME CLAMS for Kliban's first collection of new drawings since 1978. The paperback lists for $3.95... From Ballantine, GARFIELD WEIGHS IN, the fourth book chronicling the fat cat, at $4.95. Also from Ace, PHANTASIA, with album covers and other drawings by Alan Aldridge of the Beatles, Rolling Stones and others at $14.95. From Holt, Rinehart and Winston: THE JOY OF STUFFED PREPPIES, a devilish-looking cartoon book at $3.95, and ASK FOR MAY, SETTLE FOR JUNE, the latest DOONESBURY book, picking up where IN SEARCH OF REAGAN'S BRAIN left off. At $5.25, in paper.

NOVELS AND SUCH -- Here are some of the highlights of the next couple of months: James Bond will be making himself known at the book racks as the second of the John Gardner revival series will be printed in hardcover. Entitled FOR SPECIAL SERVICES, it will sell for $9.95 (that's right, $9.95 for a hardcover). Meanwhile, Berkley will put out a paperback of Gardner's first Bond book, LICENSE RENEWED, for $2.95. The two are expected to hit the bookstores in late April... Heinlein fans will also have their day at the racks. Holt, Rinehart and Winston will publish his new novel in hardcover at $15.50. Entitled FRIDAY, there is the description given by the publisher: "Friday. She's as stunning as a model, as brainy as a biochemist, and one of the best interplanetary secret agents in the business. She's also an Artificial Person--the ultimate product of genetic engineering. As she wanders through a near-future world in which the human race is threatened with imminent extinction, Friday--and her struggles for survival--seem very human indeed, right up to the wild and surprising finish."

Del Rey has five hardcovers scheduled in the next months. Out now is SPECIAL DELIVERANCE, by Clifford Simak at $12.50. Next is Piers Anthony's JUXTAPOSITION, at $13.50. Then, book two of the Second Chronicles ofThomas Covenant, THE ONE TREE by Stephen R. Donaldson at $14.50. Then STARBURST by Freaerick

Pohl at $12.50. And finally, THE ELFSTONES OF SHANNARA by Terry Brooks, at $15.95.

Asimov fans will finally be able to get the entire Robot novel series in one edition as Doubleday publishes THE COMPLETE ROBOT, in April for $19.95 collecting all of the robot stories, which have previously appeared in seven separate volumes... Mack Bolan, The Executioner, will make monthly stops at the bookstores as Gold Eagle speeds up printing schedules to monthly beginning in July. No. 43, set for July, is RETURN TO VIET NAM. (Note: for another project I am undertaking, I read the first of the new Mack Bolan series, DOUBLE CROSSFIRE. And because I promised myself to be polite when I undertook this column--after all, I like some things that some people would probably consider beneath them --I will suffice it to say that I am not clearing out one of my bookshelves to buy the entire set. I found the story a bit bizarre. But that's okay. I could not excuse the "tough guy" dialogue--sorry, Executioner fans--and I know there are a lot of you out there.)

Frank Herbert's GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE will be published in a trade paperback edition at $6.95, along with trade editions of the three previous DUNE books. All of them are from Berkley, which will also sell a trade edition of Stephen King's DANSE MACABRE, his personal tour of the horror world... Timescape's handsome line includes four paperbacks for March, including a new STAR TREK book by Sondra Marsh and Myrna Culbreath entitled THE PROMETHEUS DESIGN. Others include SOLDIER BOY, a collection of short stories by Michael Shaara. Shaara won a Pulitzer Prize for his mainstream novel, THE KILLER ANGELS, and this collection includes science fiction he wrote in the 1950s. A PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY advance review says that Shaara "was a master of a particularly humanistic brand of SF, not much written in this day of pulpier, high-tech and sword-and-sorcery sub-genres." The lead book for the month is Alexei Panshin's RITE OF PASSAGE, the award-winning '60s novel. ... First-encounter fans will probably find interesting Ace's April selection, INVASION: EARTH by Harry Harrison. The $4.95 trade paperback is illustrated.

BOOKS IN HAND -- I did do some reading, though. I received from Donner two Starblaze edition books. First, and still unread, is the Hugo-winning novel, THEY'D RATHER BE RIGHT by Mark Clifton and Frank Riley ($4.95). The jacket summary goes: "Bossy was the ultimate computer, limited only in that she had to have facts, no assumptions, with which to work. Soon Bossy offered mankind the greatest gift of all: Immortality. But only to that small handful of people mature enough to realize that they didn't know all the answers..." I got all but a little finished of the second book, MALLWORLD, a collection of the short stories by Somtow Sucharitkul, a Campbell Award-winner as the best new science fiction writer. Compiling the stories previously published in magazine form, this book revolves around Mallworld, the huge revolving shopping center in the sky where you can get everything and where the human race, imprisoned in their own system by an alien race, comes to find love, excitement and death. It takes a while to adjust to Sucharitkul's flippant writing style, but stick with it. You'll find this book worth a bit of puzzled expression.

FROM TOR -- Received and yet unread are two books I really want to get to from Tor. They are PLANET OF NO RETURN, the illustrated version of Harry Harrison's former trade-paperback, at $2.50. And THE OTHER LOG OF PHILEAS FOGG, as Philip Jose Farmer takes on Jules Verne's larger-than-life character.

EVERYTHING BUT THE SINK -- Denis Kitchen, whose Princeton, Wisconsin publishing empire has made the turn into the bookworld, advises his company will be putting out a book a month--hopefully--over the next year. The next book planned, due in soon at about $10.95, is THE ART OF WILL EISNER. Kitchen said that it will include artwork from Eisner back to his high school days along with pictures of Eisner's personnel history.

AVON CALLING -- Due out this month from Avon are THE SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME VOL. III at $3.95, including stories from Ellison, Zelazny, Aldiss, Dickson, Delany, Silverberg, and edited by Arthur C. Clarke and George W. Proctor. It includes the Nebula-winners from 1965-69. Also from Avon, at $1.95, is MISSION TO THE HEART STARS, the third book in the reissuance of novels by the late James Blish.

European Comics

By Paulette Carroll

EUROPEAN BEST-SELLERS AND THE AMERICAN MARKET:
I: OF TRANSIT AND AGING

A lot of things have happened since the old days when mine was one of the handful of names in what is now a six-inch-long list of regular TCR columnist/contributors. Some readers who are old enough to remember me (it seems like ages since my article on YOKO TSUNO appeared in #195, let alone since I actually wrote the thing) may have wondered, with various emotions, whether the sky had fallen on my head. That is, of course, a reference to the one fear of the Gauls--but I don't quite equal my countryman Astérix in bravery. (Isn't it interesting that on this side of the pond that particular concern is associated with a foolish coward?) In any case, the sky did not fall down; it "merely" changed. I am presently writing from the New York area.

Now I am not by nature an inadaptable creature. After all, I survived the big transatlantic plunge in 1963, blindfolded and with no hope of any permanent return to the oak groves of my native Gaul. And again in 1974, I weathered with scarcely a whimper the equally blind and even less reversible exodus from my spiritual homeland in Madison, Wisconsin, and the terrible journey west in a covered U-Haul truck. Whether, however, the seven years in Oregon somehow made a more permanent imprint on my soul or whether I am merely suffering from the sclerosis of old age (or was it all that other unrelated stuff--major personal problems, plural car trouble, trips to the emergency room?), I have experienced some small adaptation difficulties which have kept me busy full-time for the past several months. Meanwhile, I am trying to do research and catch up on professional journals in hopes of justifying this leave of absence without pay to my once and future academic employer in the misty Northwest. After all, they don't pay me nothing to goof off.

But enough excuses. In the midst of turmoil, there has been inspiration. It was provided, inter alia, by Sam Kujava, who raised the following question in his column in #195: "TINTIN and ASTERIX are dated material that has only recently made its way across the ocean to these shores, correct?" I was already planning to devote a column to an update on what is available, with some useful addresses and a lot of hunting tips; I am thankful to Sam for pointing out that there is also a time-dimension to the question. Translation copyright dates are not all that illuminating; it occurred to me that the browser might like to have some idea of how old these "new" albums actually are, and whether he is seeing a representative example of a given artist's current work.

Well, to begin with, we have to define the term "current." As I have had occasion to point out before, big-name European strips are first serialized in magazines. At Hergé's extremely slow pace, it takes 62 weeks to run a typical TINTIN story. Not ALL pages are invariably on the editors' desk when this process begins, but at the very least, the story will be completely blocked and outlined before

the first page goes to press. Thus, when the last few panels reach their original public in their first form, a couple of years or so have passed since their conception. While this may not correspond to an American idea of "current" work, the fact remains that it is the most recent work available to ANYONE who does not have personal access to the author. Naturally, the later albums are even more "dated," and additional time passes before a translated version (if that's what you're reading) is produced.

Where translations are concerned, however, the biggest potential delay by far is produced by cultural lag--the time it takes for a given foreign market to become sufficiently responsive to a given import. This is why there are two different translations of TINTIN: the British version was published by Meuthen for its own home market (Great Britain); it was not successful in the U.S. when it was first introduced in the sixties. Part of the problem was that the general American public found the stiff price of the hardcover too much to pay for "just a comic book." Now both the original Meuthen and the cheaper paperback American translation brought forth by Atlantic-Little-Brown sell very well on this side of the water. (Typical retail prices are $9.95 hardbound, $3.95 softbound; Meuthen has its own paperback edition available now for around $5.95. All three were available at these prices in December, 1981 at the French and Spanish Bookstore in Manhattan.)

Because of that marketing-delay factor, there is a huge range of time-lagsbetween the publication of the original version and the appearance of English-language versions in American bookstores. In the case of the earliest TINTIN, more than a generation passed between their creation by Hergé and the time they first became readily available to the U.S. public. On the other hand, ASTERIX CHEZ LES BELGES came out in Europe in 1979, and Leo Brunelle released ASTERIX IN BELGIUM in 1981. The difference, of course, is that the market was already created and waiting before Goscinny completed his last work. As for original editions, it is perfectly possible to find an album in the U.S. within months of its European publication. I did, in the case of Uderzo's lamentable solo, LE GRAND FOSSE. (I have indefinitely postponed a projected review of the latter. On the one hand, I have not been able to get enough background information on the split with Dargaud; on the other, I could not do an honest job without panning it, and I am too chicken at the moment to face the abuse this would inevitably invite upon my unworthy person.) But perhaps the most interesting and relevant fact, in this discussion of delays and aging, is that at the time I purchased FOSSE in Houston, a lot of my friends across the Atlantic had not yet bothered to pick it up.

Now such procrastination may seem out of character for a true fan. But it actually reflects profound differences in the attitudes of the American and European publics which stem directly from the nature of the works we are talking about. The U.S. reader who is willing to reach across the cultural gap for a TINTIN or an ASTERIX should go the extra step of temporal open-mindedness and not be discouraged by distances of years or even decades. For it does not MEAN the same thing. The answer to Sam's question is actually far more complex than it seems at first. It ties in to artistic and cultural issues which give the works we are talking about a different dimension of time. Both have been around for generations; even ASTERIX started before some of today's adults were born. And they are part of a very large European family of less jet-setting characters who have also been around for decades. Their styles and atmospheres are remarkably constant. What the public appreciates, and gets, in them is continuity rather than challenge; the albums are savored rather than rushed at. In a sense, there is no more hurry to get the latest title, especially for the mature reader, than to pick up that Shakespeare play you've always wanted to read. Certainly, not all readers feel that way; my point is merely that the nature of the works, and of the tradition to which they belong, allow for that sort of attitude. Every TINTIN or ASTERIX is a classic from the very first day of its publication.

And that makes them, in a sense, eminently unnewsworthy. When Tintin changed out of his golf trousers in PICAROS, it was the scoop of the decade. Ho-hum. Search the latest title for bold innovations and new directions in the comic medium, and you will meet with a crushing disappointment. These things exist in Europe, naturally; but not in the best-selling albums you will readily find at your corner bookstore. On the other hand, delve beneath the surface of a TINTIN, ASTERIX or LUCKY LUKE for the treasures of technical prowess only an established master can yield, or for insights into human nature, and you will find endless riches. But they are not really of the sort that is suited to news reporting. My old loyal opposition notwithstanding, works like Hergé's and Goscinny's lend themselves far better to the involved, leisurely analyses of the critic than to the salient sketches of the journalist.

Next time, the "where" of the topic: to locating the best-selling European comic books on the North American continent.

Big Screen Small Screen

By Joel Thingvall

STAR TREK. The second movie is only months away, and already fans wonder how it will end. Directed by Nicholas Meyer (TIME AFTER TIME), rumor has spread that Spock would die! Heaven forbid! No one ever dies in science-fiction these days. And even if Leonard Nimoy did save the galaxy by dying in a blazing nova, that does not mean that future movies could not happen before that hallowed event. This columnist feels it is all good publicity-department tactics to keep the name of the film on everyone's lips.

STAR WARS. Just to prove that ol' heroes never die, Alec Guinness will return for the third film, THE REVENGE OF THE JEDI. We all remember how poor Obi-Wan supposedly vanished into thin air in the first of the STAR WARS series, only to return as a voice in the second. (Alec suffered an ailment and was unable to participate fully in the sequel.) How dead are people in s-f films? Well, STAR WARS executive producer Howard Kazanjian feels there won't be an audience problem about Obi-Wan returning from the dead "because our dead is a different thing." Tune in during the summer of '83. (But don't look for Han Solo in any films after REVENGE; part four (being part one in the scheme of things) occurs before Luke and Han meet, and Harrison Ford's gonna be occupied on Indiana Jones adventures from then on anyway. Will he be killed off? Stay tuned.)

PINK PANTHER. The next film in this series, TRAIL OF THE PINK PANTHER, will return Peter Sellers from the real dead. Sellers will star as Inspector Clouseau through the use of outtakes and unused footage from the previous five Sellers-Clouseau films. Burt Kwouk and Herbert Lom will be back, but they will actually be doing a new film. Joanna Lumley will be the fair maiden in this upcoming Christmas release. (Fantasy fans will remember Joanne from ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE and THE NEW AVENGERS.) Another new Panther adventure is being made directly following that one, again starring Lumley, with Ted Wass (formerly Danny Dallas on SOAP) as the new Clouseau. How they'll explain that is yet to be revealed.

BRAINSTORM. Douglas Trumbull tackled many problems in the special effects of such films as CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, STAR TREK and 2001. He also managed to direct the much-acclaimed cult-classic, SILENT RUNNING. But with

the death of star Natalie Wood, Trumbull's $17-million science-fiction thriller seemed doomed. But after shutting down for weeks, and restructuring the remaining film, Natalie's unfinished scenes were either reassigned to another part, eliminated or restructured. "Everytime you see Natlie in this movie, it will be Natalie," says Trumbull. The only current foreseeable problem is overdubbing dialogue which has been obscured by camera noise in a few scenes.

Beyond Natalie Wood's last performance, we also can look forward to a special-effects sequence of a brain transference, which Trumbull is shooting in Super-Panavision 70mm film. "I'm going to try to put on the screen what a nightmare looks like, what awareness might be like if you left your body. Only I want to do it in a way that's completely credible. This will be a new form of surrealism in motion pictures. It will have to do with levels of perception in motion pictures...what's real and what's not real."

SOUNDTRACK. Two-time Academy-Award winning composer Irwin Kostal has begun the prestigious assignment of recording a new digital, Dolby-Stereo soundtrack for the Disney animated classic FANTASIA. The feature was first recorded in 1937 with Leopold Stokowski supplying the musical wisdom. Hailed as a milestone when first released in stereophonic sound, the recent innovations in sound recording will again give the film an innovative state-of-the-art soundtrack. Kostal received his awards for WEST SIDE STORY and THE SOUND OF MUSIC, and he was nominated for Academy Awards for MARY POPPINS, BEDKNOBS AND BROOMSTICKS and PETE'S DRAGON. The 125-piece orchestra will take two weeks to re-record the sound. (The charts will remain the same, of course.) For trivia lovers, four members of the current orchestra were involved with the original recording in 1937.

MARVEL. The Marvel folk have been tying into movie projects with their color comics line for the past few years. ANNIE, CONAN, DARK CRYSTAL, BLADE RUNNER and the continuation of RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK are on the horizon. But rumor has it that Marvel is seeking to license G.I. JOE, a comic tie-in they have with Hasbro, as a network TV program. Only time will tell. Currently, the live-action SILVER SURFER film has been shelved. But THE FANTASTIC FOUR has been announced by CBS Theatrical Films as "in preparation." (Stan Lee is Executive Producer; Lawrence J. Block did the screenplay). That would be a live-action wonder. (CBS Theatrical also has in development a live-action--presumably, as there was a cartoon version last year--version of BETTY BOOP, to be produced by Norman Stephens, Barry Krost and Joan Scott. Bernadette Peters would be perfect for the lead, don't you think?)

CRITICS. A critic for the Philadelphia INQUIRER banned coverage of horror films in his paper. "I consider films like MADMAN and MANIAC far worse than sexual porn. They're more obscene and hopelessly repetitive. Paying attention to such films dignifies them. I have better things to do with my name than watch women being chopped up," says critic Desmond Ryan. I guess that's why they publish such magazines as CINEFANTASTIQUE and FATAGORIA --for all of us horror buffs to say that there is some artistic quality to senseless horror.

TRON. Disney sees their summer release, TRON, as a "milestone in optical and light effects" that utilize a combination of state-of-the-art computer graphics with special techniques in live-action photography. By using computer graphics, the studio eliminated the need for models and miniatures.

What Disney creates in TRON is three-dimensional objects, pathways, tunnels, etc. all of which have a resemblance to video games but with greater detail and realism. TRON stars Jeff Bridges, David Warner and Bruce Boxleitner.

SUPERMAN. The recent showing of the film on television had on television had impressive ratings (second for part one in one week, first for part two the next), but ABC still ended in second place in the ratings both weeks. Besides having to watch the lengthy credits twice, the Man of Steel did little in the first evening's show, and the whole film--in general--made this watcher want to buy a big screen TV. Sources tell me a few minutes were added. [See the Mailboat for details. MT] Part three of the adventures of this DC hero will feature Richard Pryor as the "bad guy."

SHORT TAKES. On the horizon is a re-make of CAT PEOPLE with Nastassia Kinski and Malcolm McDowell. The make-up is rumored to be stupendous. Directed by Paul Schrader (HARDCORE, BLUE COLLAR, writer of TAXI DRIVER) ... The interesting aspect of the new CONA film will be to watch how many heads roll. It could come from three directions: in parent company Universal if the film does poor box office; heads rolling on bodies in the aisles if the film is not taken seriously; heads through the snow on the screen if John Milius doesn't make the "necessary cuts" that have already delayed the film... KRULL featuring the acting talents of Ken Marshall has been getting advertising space in VARIETY. Directed by Peter Yates (THE DEEP), we will have to wait until the summer of '83 to see if this adventure fantasy set in a far-off distant world will be another STAR WARS... John Carpenter's THE THING is trying to avoid a horror/fantasy label. They already know that lovers of fantasy will attend, I guess.

"Detecto-Vision" will be introduced in DEAD MEN DON'T WEAR PLAID, a Steve Martin film directed by Carl Reiner that promises to be funny... John Landis supposedly has Jack Arnold ready to direct a remake of THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. Arnold originally directed the film in 1954. You wonder if you can always believe the humorous John Landis, though. Supposedly, Clint Eastwood would like to play Dick Tracy, another "comic" project Landis has under development.

A $3 million set has been constructed for the Disney version of Ray Bradbury's SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES. This is supposed to be the biggest set in Disney history, and the most expensive single set since HELLO DOLLY. (No figures are in my possession on the cost of Francis Ford Coppola's ONE FROM THE HEART.) Disney press people say the film will be a breakthrough for the organization since it will be a "hard" PG. "It is calculated to scare the bejeebers out of the audience..." and will thrust the Disney studio into a new realm of filmmaking.

DUNE will finally get underway this summer. David Lynch (THE ELEPHANT MAN) will put together the current pieces of screenplay, storyboards and location settings and attempt to find some actors and technicians... Bo Derek fans will be pleased to know that THE PIRATE has been dropped as a film. Happily, John and Bo have two other projects in the works: ADAM AND EVE (maybe John will be Adam?) and THE MERMAID. I hear there's no costume budget for either... I was disappointed to hear that a live-action version of THE THREE CABALLEROS has been shelved. Dan Aykroyd, Steve Martin and John Belushi are still seeking financing. If you have a spare ten million... Rights to VAMPIRELLA have shifted to Polygram Pictures and production chiefs Jon (Mr. Barbra Streisand) Peters and Peter Guber. Like others, they hope to make a series of films... ABC has announced that THE PHOENIX, a non-costumed superhero series (played straight) will premiere sometime in April. The pilot appeared last summer as a Sunday movie special... And Paramount has been signed to do a pilot for ABC of MODESTY BLAISE. The notice in VARIETY described it as being "based on the book."

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